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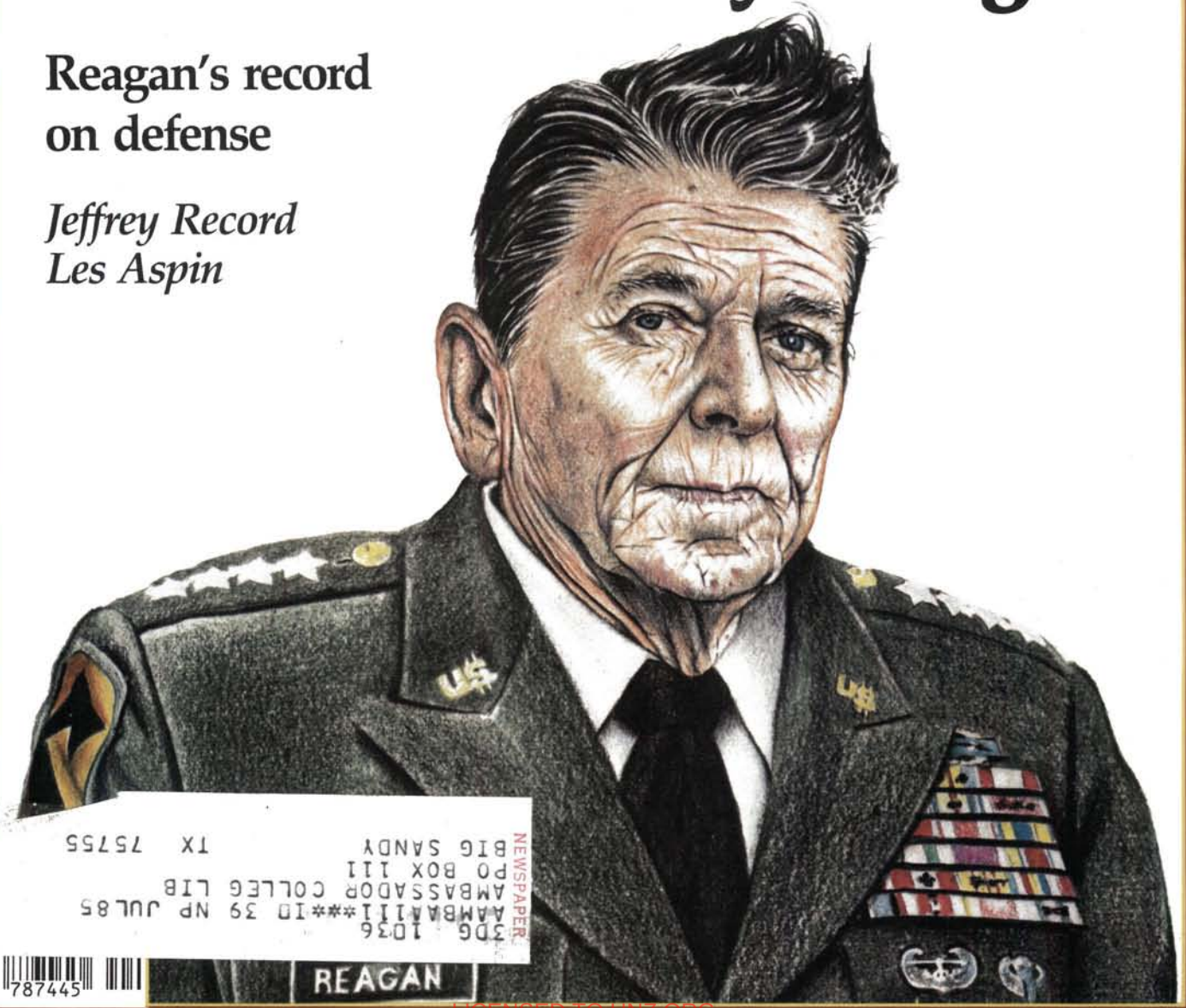

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CORRESPONDENCE

DECTER CORRECTOR

To the editor:

Midge Decter should be held to some standard of accuracy, even when she is gossiping about one Kennedy or another. In her review of the Horowitz and Collier compendium ("Dissolute Dynasty," TNR, August 27) she takes at face value the claim that Robert Kennedy was somehow involved in assassination attempts or plots against Fidel Castro. There is no evidence or testimony to support this; on the contrary, the proposed use of Mafia-types to do the job was undertaken during the Eisenhower Administration, and there is ample C.I.A. and other testimony that when Attorney General Kennedy learned of it, he was appalled and ordered it stopped. This may not fit the now increasingly chic revisionism, but it has the virtue of truth.

FRANK MANKIEWICZ
Washington, D.C.

Ms. Decter replies:

Mr. Mankiewicz misses my point, which was not to gossip about the Kennedys but to try to understand how it is that this particular family, beset by scandals half of which would be more than enough to sink other politicians, should have achieved a blanket amnesty. Others are judged by their records. With the Kennedys, we are forever being assured by their defenders about what was, or is, "really" in their hearts. Thus Mr. Mankiewicz has perfectly exemplified my point. Standards of accuracy, indeed. Evidently the only acceptable standard where the Kennedys are concerned is a double one.

MONDALE AND THE JEWS

To the editors:

The last sentence of Morton Kondracke's article on the Jewish vote ("Scaring Up Votes," TNR, October 1) says, "Walter Mondale, meanwhile . . . has got to remind Jews that he was a part of Camp David and to identify Reagan with the radical right." Here is what Moshe Dayan's Camp David memoir, *Breakthrough*, says about Mondale: "What I resented most was the part played by Vice President Mondale, who at other times and on other occasions had been helpful. Now, however, whenever the President showed signs of calming down and holding an even-tempered dialogue, Mondale jumped in with fresh complaints which disrupted the talk. I was disgusted." I do not believe that Walter Mondale can take any credit for his pro-Israel role at Camp David.

JACQUES TORCZYNER
New York, New York

SKEWED SKERRY

To the editors:

Peter Skerry cannot understand why the White House's determination to "defund the left" does not stop with "New Left types" with "roots in 1960s radicalism," but extends even to the Industrial Areas Foundation ("Vendetta in the Valley," TNR, September 17 & 24). I think Reagan's people grasp the political realities better than Skerry does. Each of the major community organizing efforts in the country—I.A.F., Citizen Action, ACORN, National People's Action, and others—threaten Reagan for the same reasons: they seek to empower the poor, specifically by registering poor people to vote. Rather than criticize all organizers except the I.A.F., Skerry should take the time to find out something about them. By emphasizing what divides organizers, not what unites them, he indulges in a sectarianism that distorts an otherwise excellent analysis.

DAVID BLANKENHORN
New York, New York

MOM'S DAY MADE

To the editors:

David Owen's review of *Good Morning, Merry Sunshine* by Bob Greene ("Bringing Up Baby," TNR, October 1) made my day. I was enraged by Greene's book. Anyone taking care of a newborn infant doesn't have the time to write about it. Greene was cashing in on the experiences that most women have quietly and painfully lived without the glorification of fame and money. Meanwhile, because of the structure of his work / social life, which he is unwilling to alter, he avoids the thing that is the hardest part of new motherhood; the moment-to-moment dependency of a tiny, helpless, and demanding human

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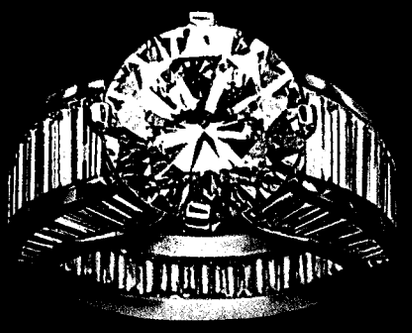

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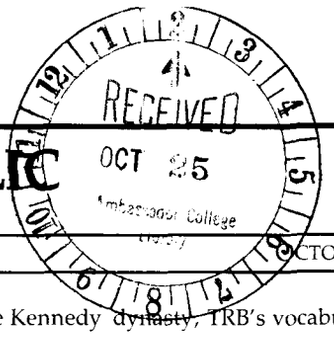

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FROM WASHINGTON

WALTER, WALTER EVERYWHERE

Mondale supporters are enjoying a well-earned lifting of spirits and a few days' free ride in the press, based on their man's triumph in the first Presidential debate. A hot-air balloon accidentally deflates at a Reagan rally in North Carolina, and CBS suddenly finds this an event full of foreboding, worth showing on the evening news. Last week the balloon could have exploded, killing half a dozen people, and this would have been taken by the broadcast oracles as evidence of Reagan's invulnerability.

Nevertheless, the sad thing about this election is that I don't know anyone who really wants Walter Mondale to be President of the United States. Not *anyone*, and I live in Washington, D.C., home of the only electoral votes Mondale is sure to get. That's no one in the ostensibly liberal Washington press corps, no one in the Democratic political community, no one even among the people I know on Mondale's own staff. I'm not acquainted with any members of his family.

Oh, Mondale would win pretty handily an election limited to my friends and acquaintances. Plenty of people hunger to see Ronald Reagan removed from the White House. Most would rather have a liberal Democrat than a conservative Republican guiding the destiny of the nation. People admire Mondale's stamina and dignity, his determinedly serious campaign, in the face of Reagan's stampede of carnival elephants. And the debate was a reminder that Mondale is a decent man, smart, and not a wimp.

But I have yet to meet anyone who is really inspired by the thought of Walter Mondale in the White House. I've been wearing a Mondale button for the past couple of weeks, and people have said, "I didn't know you were working for the campaign." The assumption was that anybody enthusiastic enough to publicly identify with the candidate must be on the payroll.

The utter absence of enthusiasm is what makes Mondale's likely loss different from the electoral catastrophes of the past. Even at their lowest ebbs, Barry Goldwater in 1964 and George McGovern in 1972 had millions of deeply committed supporters. If anything, there's usually an inverse correlation between the number of supporters a candidate has and the intensity of their support. A hard core of loyalists is how great losers like Goldwater and McGovern got nominated in the first place.

But Mondale got the nomination through sheer political professionalism. In fact, this was the year the Democratic Party rules were rewritten precisely to minimize the influence of overheated amateurs who might saddle the party with someone of little broad appeal, and put the nomination back in the hands of worldly professionals, who were thought to know best how to produce a winning ticket without worrying about what for. The campaign course was charted by ambitious young technicians out of an office called "Public Strategies, Inc." Walter Mondale is the result, a product of ten thousand cool calculations and nary a drop of ardor.

In the primaries, Mondale cultivated and benefited from the same "go with the winner" mentality that is now dragging him down in his fight against Reagan. It's the reason he got all those endorsements from Democratic big shots, and it's the only reason many people in his campaign are working for him. People were wondering whatever happened to the Mondale machine. It's still there. It's all that's there. That's the trouble.

In the October 7 debate, Diane Sawyer skewered Mondale's repeated complaint that his "message isn't getting through" to the voters. "Given that you have been in public office for so many years," she asked sweetly, "what accounts for the failure of your message to get through?" The answer, of course, is that he has no message. Or rather, his message keeps changing. Mondale uses too many superlatives to pass for a

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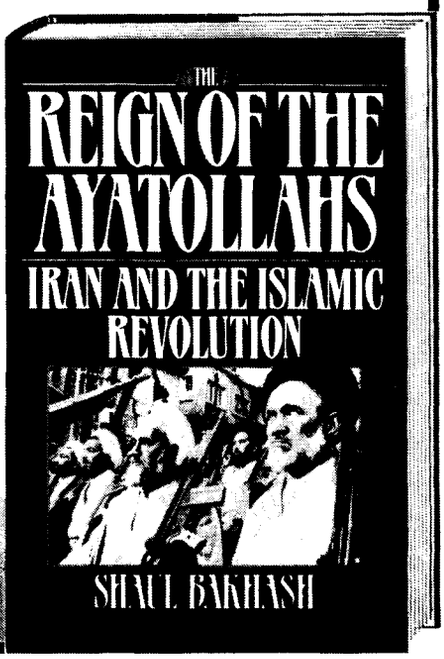

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
OCTOBER 29, 1984

THE ELECTRONIC PLEBISCITE

Walter F. Mondale won the great debate by a nose, or maybe by a neck. But he won the debate about the debate by a country mile. As of 10:40 P.M. Eastern time on Sunday, October 7, when the two candidates strode smiling and waving from the stage of the Kentucky Center for the Arts, Mr. Mondale had done three things. He had demonstrated a genuinely if marginally greater grasp of a number of domestic issues than had his opponent. He had shown a superior ability, on that particular evening, to remember and deliver a prepared closing statement. And he had displayed the more impressive capacity for standing and talking for an hour and a half without showing signs of fatigue. By sunrise the next morning, this modest edge had become, tentatively, a victory. (The process could be traced in the changing headline over David S. Broder's front-page story in Monday's *Washington Post*, which went from a noncommittal MONDALE TRIES KENNEDY STYLE in the first edition to a more confident MONDALE PERFORMS SKILLFULLY in the final.) By Tuesday, the cautiously awarded victory had become an unquestioned, gaudy triumph. And by Wednesday, Mr. Mondale was being discussed in terms that made one think of Caesar marching through Rome with Vercingetorix in chains before him.

Don't get us wrong. We're glad Mr. Mondale "won," which is to say we're glad he was seen to have won. As we explained in this space last week, we think he is the better candidate, and what we saw in the debate only confirmed that choice. Nor do we want to belittle the importance of the debate in purely political terms. The new opinion polls will begin to roll in between the time this is written and the time it is read, and we expect they will show that President Reagan's huge and previously unassailable lead has been narrowed. The possibility of a permanent political realignment in favor of the Republican Party now seems less formidable. To a remarkable degree the morale of the Democrats has been restored; as Sidney Blumenthal reports ("Trading Places," page 14), Democratic candidates for the House and Senate are suddenly eager to appear in public with the man at the top of the ticket. All this is good news. Still, a bit of perspective is in order—about the debate, and about the changes in the American political system, not all of them wholesome, that are highlighted by the debate's centrality.

What about the quality of the debate? Although the postmortems focused on Mr. Reagan's hesitations and confusions, the fact is that neither man showed himself capable of genuine eloquence, or even of the ersatz variety. Mr. Mondale made his points in sturdy but undistinguished language. He has still not entirely freed himself from his inside-the-Beltway vocabulary; most Americans, we imagine, were baffled by his casual references to such arcana as "the C.B.O." and "Urban Development Action Grants." (At least he didn't say UDAG.) As for the President, bereft of his usual script he seemed quite at sea. He reached for the illusory safety of material that had worked for him in the past ("There you go again," etc.), inadvertently helping Mr. Mondale to arrogate to himself the role of spokesman for the future. In his astonishingly weak closing statement, the President thrashed around in a gummy morass of meaningless statistics. "In 1980 or 1979," he said in one especially Irwin Corey-like outburst, "the person with a fixed income of $8,000 was $500 above the poverty line, and this maybe explains why there are numbers still in poverty. By 1980 that person was $500 below the poverty line." Maybe the Lord understood, but the audience didn't. Mr. Reagan rushed to the Thomas Paine quotation that signaled the end of his statement like a choking swimmer clutching for a life preserver.

Though the debate was uninspiring, it was at least earnest and businesslike. Little time was wasted on fluffery and none at all on rancor. In contrast to the Ford-Carter and Carter-Reagan debates, the candidates made no effort to outdo each other in elaborate paeans to the greatness of America. In contrast to this year's encounters among the

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Democrats during the primary season, there was no palpable personal tension or bitterness between the debaters. If the evening's civil tone was largely the result of Mr. Mondale's shrewd tactical decision to acknowledge (and thus diminish the importance of) Mr. Reagan's personal likability, it was none the less welcome for that. With the help of the panel of reporters (especially Fred Barnes, whose sharp questions to both men elicited the debate's most interesting moments), Mr. Mondale and Mr. Reagan gave the American people a serious discussion of serious issues.

It was on the question of abortion that the two men engaged with each other most spiritedly. The President made it clear that he views abortion as indistinguishable from murder, justifiable only when a woman's "life is at risk if she goes through with the pregnancy." This allowed Mr. Mondale to cast the issue in terms of the morality of abortion in cases of rape or incest. It was a debater's tactic—and a fair one, since Mr. Reagan has supported a constitutional amendment that would indeed ban abortion even in those extreme circumstances, though his views were rather more garbled on Sunday night. Mr. Mondale was not forced to deal directly with the more difficult (and far more common) case of a woman who chooses to end her pregnancy because she is unmarried, or because she already has all the children she wishes to have, or for some financial or other personal reason—that is, a woman who, in the view of some "pro-lifers," simply uses abortion as a means of birth control. But he did set out a general position that would encompass these cases too, and that position was firmly "pro-choice." "The basic decision of the Supreme Court is that each person has to make this judgment in her own life, and that's the way it's been done," Mr. Mondale said. "And it's a personal and private moral judgment." On abortion, Mr. Mondale spoke plainly and forthrightly.

The debate was serious, it was genuine, and "our" candidate "won." Yet we have qualms—and not about this debate in particular, or about its format, or even, exactly, about the idea of televised debates in general. What we have qualms about is the informal, extraconstitutional political system with which such debates are inextricably bound up. That system might be called electronic plebiscitary democracy (or, in a darker mode, cathode-ray Bonapartism). It is not the product of any formal, conscious, collective deliberation. It is, rather, the constantly shifting outcome of a chaotic mélange of social forces (such as geographical mobility), assorted reforms (such as direct primaries and federal campaign financing), and technological innovations (television above all). The most striking feature of the system of electronic plebiscitary democracy is direct, continuous, highly intense communication between Presidents (and would-be Presidents) at one end, and scores of millions of people at the other. The politicians reach the people via television; the people reach the politicians via polls. In this relationship, the politicians act almost solely in their capacity as popular leaders and scarcely at all in their capacity as party officials or government managers. The people act almost solely in their capacity as atomized individual television-watchers, and scarcely at all in their capacity as citizens of states and communities or members of political parties or other voluntary associations.

The result of this interaction between the people and their tribunes is a species of "democracy" the Greek philosophers distrusted. The system of electronic plebiscitary democracy has been superimposed upon, but has little in common with, the richly layered system of democratic responsibility and accountability the Founders wrote into the Constitution. Presidential campaigns are increasingly tied to this new system, with the result that they are growing at once more "democratic" and less participatory. It is now possible to run a successful national campaign with a few dozen lawyers, consultants, media experts, and liaison people. The great infrastructures of volunteers and doorbell-ringers that marked the campaigns of a generation ago have simply vanished. No wonder it's impossible to find a Mondale button.

And no wonder the electorate is so volatile. The 1984 campaign has been marked from the beginning by swift, sudden swings in public opinion, driven by television touts and pack journalism. In the primaries and through the post-convention period, Mr. Mondale was made, unmade, made, unmade, made, and unmade again by such swings. Now it's Mr. Reagan's turn to be brought down a notch by the mentality of mass political faddism that has done so much to build him up.

Modern campaigns are media campaigns, and the peculiarity of the main medium—television—is that it does not mediate. The pre-packaged message goes straight from the adman's tape deck to the TV set's glowing phosphors to the viewer's vulnerable brain. That's why, as long as television rules politics, we will need television debates. Whatever their flaws, such debates at least permit voters to examine candidates under conditions of rough equality, so that the candidates, as distinct from their advertising staffs, can be usefully compared. It's clear by now that on a medium that in many ways naturally favors incumbents, debates carry a built-in bias for challengers. So Mr. Reagan deserves the praise Mr. Mondale gave him for agreeing to participate, a decision that now appears more selfless than he could have imagined. The stakes in the second debate, scheduled for October 21, are high.

NOTEBOOK

□ WHAT DOES THE KING of Jordan want? For the past seven years he has said that he cannot come to the bargaining table with Israel because of the ideological inflexibility of the Likud government and because of the Israeli settlements on the West Bank. Well, there is no longer a Likud government, and the miserable economic condition of the Jewish state makes more expendi-

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ture on settlement very unlikely (as the settlers themselves sorrowfully admit). Indeed, Prime Minister Shimon Peres is a man committed to the principle of territorial compromise. Moreover, the destruction of the P.L.O. in Lebanon removed yet a further obstacle to an Israeli-Jordanian meeting. This is the time, in short, for which moderate Arabs have allegedly been waiting. But not King Hussein; no eye for the main chance has he. King Hussein delivered a speech to the Jordanian Parliament on October 1 which was not merely a refusal to accept the invitation to talk that Mr. Peres had sent as soon as he took office. It was an insult to the hopes of the many, including many Arabs, who thought that the rise of Mr. Peres presented a genuine opportunity for progress. "Stratagems of procrastination and prevarication," he called the Israeli position. King Hussein seems to feel that the Palestinian problem is not his problem until he decides that it's his problem. Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinians may all pay heavily for that conceit. Meanwhile he is encouraged in his intransigence by his colleagues to the north. Prime Minister Rashid Karami of Lebanon announced last week that while he wants the Israelis out of the southern precincts of his country, he is not prepared to talk with them about withdrawal. The Israelis may be pardoned, then, if their patience wears thin. Still, it does not. Shimon Peres's offer to the King still stands, and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's new proposals for a withdrawal from Lebanon are probably the most accommodating proposals that one state has put to another in many years.

□ GEOFFREY SAMPSON is a professor in the department of linguistics at the University of Lancaster in England. The author of several important books in his field, he is also a contributor to a volume published in England and edited by Lord Bullock, *Biographical Companion to Modern Thought*. Mr. Sampson's subject was Noam Chomsky, a seminal figure in modern linguistics. The bulk of the essay dealt with his professional work. But Mr. Chomsky has also had a career as a political activist and polemicist; to this aspect of Mr. Chomsky's life, Mr. Sampson devoted less than fifty words, albeit critical ones: "he forfeited authority as a political commentator by a series of actions widely regarded as ill judged (repeated polemics minimizing the Khmer Rouge atrocities in Cambodia; endorsement of a book—which Chomsky admitted he had not read—that denied the historical reality of the Jewish Holocaust)." Bland words these, and understatements as well. But when Harper & Row was about to put out a large American paperback second edition of the book, under the title *Twentieth Century Culture*, it insisted that the passage be eliminated. Lord Bullock asked Mr. Sampson to cut the offending words. Mr. Sampson refused, and Lord Bullock and an associate produced their own cover-up entry on Mr. Chomsky, purged of the important information about his quite mad views on the historiography of the Nazi and Cambodian genocides. Why did a rich and distinguished American publishing house move to protect Mr. Chomsky's reputation from his own intellectually and morally reckless acts? One answer, at least, is obvious. Mr. Chomsky, who has often put himself forward as a free speech absolutist, threatened to initiate libel action; hence Lord Bullock's demand to Mr. Sampson. (Lord Bullock's editor at Harper & Row, Hugh Van Dusen, said that it was never a question of libel but of verifiable factuality. Was Mr. Van Dusen saying that Mr. Sampson's statement was not factual? No. But the lawyers wanted them out anyway. If it wasn't a question of a libel threat what were the lawyers doing on this matter at all? Curious business, this editing of books by attorneys.) Were Mr. Sampson's words libelous? No, they are the truth; they aren't remotely libelous, and they're not malicious either. Has Mr. Chomsky forfeited authority? There are still people who make sentimental excuses because of his professional brilliance. Avishai Margalit, for one, in a review of Mr. Chomsky's *The Fateful Triangle* in the June 28 issue of the *New York Review of Books*, could not bring himself to admit that Mr. Chomsky is an uncommonly dishonest writer. But almost everywhere else, even in circles which had once revered him, Mr. Chomsky is now seen as a crank and an embarrassment. Shame on Lord Bullock, and shame on those in Harper & Row who countenance this cowardly complicity in keeping the truth about Mr. Chomsky from readers who would consult what purports to be an authoritative reference work.

□ TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Terrorist counterrevolutionary attacks of the kind that brought death and demonstrations in Havana last week gave force to those who are pushing Castro's 26th of July regime toward open dictatorship. The whole Cuban social structure crumbled with the fall of Batista; the 'Fidelista' movement has had the task of creating an entirely new order in its place. And this has not been easy since the Castro movement is not a coherent organization but merely a fighting front of moderates, extremists, fanatics, and democrats, not all of whom favor evolution to a stable, democratic system. What has been going on behind Castro's hesitations, errors, and abundant rhetoric is a fight for supremacy between three competing groups: the traditional state machinery, the rebel army, and the new I.N.R.A. (National Institute of Agrarian Reform). Until recently the first of these appeared to be winning out. But the outbreaks of violence have strengthened the others. Until now Castro has been able to act as arbiter between the three competing forces, due to his enormous prestige (much greater than foreign observers see). But suddenly he has named his brother, Raul, Minister of the Revolutionary Armed forces although he knows his brother's unpopularity. The explanation apparently is that his opponents among those damaged by the agrarian reform and friends of the ex-dictator Batista are becoming so active and so threatening that he feels the need for the maximum of filial as well as military allegiance. (The Editors, November 2, 1959.)

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ON THE HILL

MIDNIGHT MADNESS

THE SENATE FLOOR on the afternoon of Friday, October 5, was awash in big names. Ted Kennedy traded compliments with Strom Thurmond. Barry Goldwater argued with Jennings Randolph. Howard Baker chatted strategy with Bob Dole. Then, at about 5 P.M., in the back of the chamber, Daniel Patrick Moynihan stepped to the portable lectern and began lecturing—as if to undergraduates. As his glasses migrated from his face to his hands to his breast pocket and back to his face, the senior Senator from New York berated his colleagues for their faults. "What has happened to Congress?" he asked. "Why can it not do its work?"

It was an all-too-pertinent query, capping as it did an incredibly embarrassing week for the nation's lawmakers. Congress had originally planned to adjourn by Thursday, October 4, to give its members a month to campaign for reelection. Trying to meet the deadline, the Senate pulled two near all-nighters and rammed through several important measures. But a civil rights bill with overwhelming support in both houses got lost in the shuffle because there wasn't enough time. Ditto the genocide treaty and an environmental cleanup bill. Even so, Congress failed to adjourn on time because it had failed to fulfill its most basic responsibility—approving a government budget. At this writing they're still at it.

Moynihan's question was a difficult one to answer. No one controls the sprawling legislative process, yet everyone assesses blame. President Reagan, explaining his decision to shut down the federal bureaucracy as of midday Thursday, said, "You can lay this right on the majority party of the House of Representatives." That one was too ludicrous to let pass—the Democratic House had in fact approved a temporary funding extension, and the Republican Senate had not. House Majority Leader Jim Wright stormed up to the press gallery to issue a refutation: "It's inaccurate, it's untrue, and he repeatedly does this. . . . He lives in a fantasy world, as if he states it and then it's so. . . . I'm getting sick and tired of my colleagues being whipping boys for his policy failures."

The House, for its part, blamed the Senate. Representative Silvio Conte of Massachusetts delivered the most stinging attack in his "Ode to a Hundred Neros":

> Last night I had the strangest dream as I lay in bed
> I saw a lovely chamber decked in gold, blue, white, and red.
> Ninety-nine men and women sat and played their violins.
> But instead of a conductor stood a man in stripes and pins.
> "It's only a billion bucks!" he cried, and pleaded for their votes.
> The orchestra found harmony and put it in their notes.
> Each player took a turn with an amendment as baton.
> Each movement ever louder as the piece dragged on and on.
> Then suddenly the drapes caught fire and flames shot up the wall.
> And soon the room was full of smoke and busts began to fall.
> The pillars cracked—the orchestra responded right on key.
> Ignoring all around them, not resisting any spree.
> What happened next, I do not know. God saved me. I awoke.
> But one-half of the Capitol was left in dust and smoke.
> The symphony composed last night would put Mozart to shame—
> But the orchestra's a laughingstock, and gluttony's to blame.

AT 6 P.M. THURSDAY, the House-Senate conference committee crammed into Room S-207 to try and come up with a budget for fiscal 1985. In the corridors outside the room one could see at least part of the reason for the fiscal paralysis. Scores of lobbyists—the special interests incarnate—nervously paced the halls as their fates were decided inside. There must have been one lobbyist for every budget provision accepted or rejected by either house, ranging from transportation to fetal experimentation. For example, Travis A. Montgomery, executive secretary of the Board of Harbor Commissioners for the Port of Long Beach, was following one of the most contentious parts of the continuing resolution, the water projects bill. The House had approved $139 million, the Senate $82 million. Mr. Montgomery's request was part of the difference. He was unapologetic for pushing for his share. "They don't have a clean bill," he observed. Several other groups got what they wanted. Why should his be different?

With the budget in doubt and the federal debt limit looming, Congress was not too busy to attend to trivial pursuits. As Reagan prepared to shut down the government Thursday morning, the hot topic on the House floor was a proposal to underwrite $33 million in interest payments owed by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Eight members rose to denounce the debtor. Representative Gerald Solomon of New York won the rhetorical battle with his condemnation of the "moonlight raid on the Federal Treasury by bandits wearing black ties and ball gowns" in "the most expensive and silliest night at the opera since the Marx brothers." Toby Roth of Wisconsin interrupted the indignation to declare, out of the blue, that "in the next session I intend to press forward with my four-point [farm] export proposal." Indiana Republican Dan Burton rose to claim the Congressional golf trophy he had won from Illinois Democrat Marty Russo. And as the budget conferees haggled into the night, the House debated a resolution from Bill Goodling of Pennsylvania to make William Penn a United States citizen. After a moving tribute to the founder of his home state, Goodling yielded to questions from the floor. In a sadly unintentional parody of Congress's lack of fiscal discipline throughout the week, Romano L. Mazzoli of Kentucky rose to ask if any costs would be incurred through benefits to Penn's descendants or other provisions. He was assured there would be none, and the motion passed unanimously. The government remained shut down, and Congress kept talking. But William Penn is at last an American.

JACOB M. SCHLESINGER

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A realistic peace plan for Ulster.

UNFINISHED IRELAND

Dublin

There is an air of expectation here, a sense that for the first time in her five years as British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher may be willing to give way to the Irish view about what should be done in Northern Ireland. For the past five months officials from the British and Irish governments have been meeting to work out an agreement on a joint policy for the troubled province. The result of their work should be announced in November, when the Irish Prime Minister, Garret FitzGerald, and Mrs. Thatcher meet in Ireland for a summit on the North. There have been hints in both British and Irish newspapers that we may be about to see the most significant agreement on the Ulster issue since the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973, which was the first time the Protestants had consented to share power with Catholics in the North.

Shortly after James Prior resigned in mid-September from his job as Secretary of State of Northern Ireland, he broadly defined the terms of the current discussions. He said that Britain would be willing to grant "a formal right of consultation to the Irish government on a wide range of issues [in Northern Ireland]." Such a development, he said, "would constitute an enormous step and would demand a reciprocal move by the Republic of Ireland." Most informed observers say that at the very least Mrs. Thatcher is willing to grant the Irish permission to maintain an official observer presence in Belfast, and it is rumored that she might go further if the Irish government follows Prior's advice and pushes for a voter referendum to remove Articles 2 and 3 from the Irish Constitution, provisions which make a symbolic claim to the territory of the entire island. The articles have long been a source of irritation to the Unionists in the North, who say they prove that the predominantly Catholic Irish Republic is an aggressor state that wishes to dominate its predominantly Protestant neighbor.

At the highest level, relations between Britain and Ireland are better than they have been in at least three years. The primary reason for this is the issuance of the New Ireland Forum report last May, when Irish Nationalists from the North and South agreed for the first time on a common series of proposals for dealing with the Ulster problem. It was significant in two ways: one, warring factions of Irish Nationalists were brought together in a harmony they had never displayed before; and two, their final statement gave generous (for them) recognition of Northern Unionism as a legitimate Irish tradition. Since then the anti-Republic braying of even such die-hard Unionists as the Reverend Ian Paisley has been muted and pro forma. (Paisley was invited to testify before the forum. He declined, choosing instead to make his views known by putting up "Ulster is British" posters in the middle of the night outside the Irish Parliament and the General Post Office, which he was able to do under the watchful and friendly guardianship of the Irish police.)

Still, it must be remembered that the Northern Irish problem is ancient and seemingly intractable, and that any breakthrough will appear insignificant when weighed against the durability of human bitterness there. It is a complicated business to work out an agreement between governments of two democratic states whose peoples have distrusted each other for eight hundred years. Everyone remembers how, after Northern Nationalists, moderate Northern Unionists, and the governments of the Republic and Britain had worked out the Sunningdale Agreement, the pact was ruined by a violent, bitter Protestant workers' strike encouraged by Unionist extremists, the foremost of whom was Ian Paisley.

THE CRUX of the Northern problem is that the British cannot successfully manipulate opinion among their most loyal subjects in the North, the Unionists, whom they have vainly been trying to persuade to share power with Northern Catholics for the past twelve years. Although Unionists are in the majority in the province and so would run any democratically elected government there, the Unionist record of discrimination against Catholics is abysmal. British troops have patrolled the province since 1969, the year that the modern "Troubles" began with wholesale burning of Catholic homes by Protestant gangs; and the British government has ruled their people since 1972.

Ulster politicians of all stripes are not happy with British rule. The Protestants want their old power back. The Catholics do not want a return to the old pre-Troubles Protestant rule, but neither are they content to let matters stand as they are. They feel that over the years the British, and especially the British law enforcement authorities, have developed such a bias in favor of Protestants that Northern Catholics can no longer hope to receive equal justice under the law.

Northern Catholics now resent the presence of British soldiers, whom they greeted initially with cups of tea and warm smiles. They dread the sight of the Ulster Defense Regiment, a British Army adjunct made up of local men, who are overwhelmingly Protestant. To be stopped on the road and searched by a young neighbor given authority by his U.D.R. uniform is a common and infuriating experience for Northern Catholics. In recent years, the British Army has left more and more of the local law enforcement work to the U.D.R. and the Royal Ulster Constabulary, also a predominantly Protestant force. In the last two years, undercover R.U.C. men have shot several suspected or known Irish Republican Army members in cold blood while allegedly in hot pursuit. Trial testimony and recent statements by a coroner handling inquests for some of the shootings have revealed that there were serious irregularities in police reports about these shootings. Northern Catholics now commonly refer to the R.U.C.'s "shoot-to-kill policy."

To make matters worse, last June the judge in the trial of three Royal Ulster Constabulary men accused of murder-

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ing three unarmed I.R.A. members from his bench commended the defendants for their action, which resulted in "bringing the three deceased to justice, in this case the final court of justice." He acquitted the policemen. A few months later, another Northern judge sitting in trial of one policeman accused of murder in a similar case congratulated the accused on his aim. He too acquitted the policeman. Not a single official in Northern Ireland or Britain uttered one word of public dismay or reprimand against either judge. These two incidents anger Northern Catholics more than any other single recent event in the North; even in a system that Catholics feel is rigged against them, there is still the expectation that judges should be impartial.

ALTHOUGH PAISLEY himself has sounded somewhat less aggressive in the last year in his political statements about Irish nationalism, Northern extremists—Protestant and Catholic alike—have never been as powerful as they are today. In the June European Parliamentary elections, Paisley received the biggest majority of his career. He received more votes than any of the other candidates in the province. In the British Parliamentary elections last year (Northern Ireland sends seventeen representatives to Parliament, but they have no executive functions in Northern Ireland, and the British Cabinet controls all the key patronage and government agencies in Ulster), candidates from Sinn Fein, the political wing of the I.R.A., won 40 percent of the Catholic vote. Their leader, Gerry Adams, won a seat for the first time with a substantial vote in West Belfast.

The North's moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party—not Catholic officially but by its general appeal identified as such—which believes in a united, independent Ireland achieved by nonviolent means, has been steadily losing ground to Sinn Fein in recent elections. Most observers here think that it is the growing appeal of Sinn Fein among young Catholic voters in the North that has moved Mrs. Thatcher toward greater sympathy with the views of moderate Irish Nationalists.

But there are divisions among Irish Nationalists in the Republic, too. The major split goes back to 1920, when Irish rebels signed a treaty with the British for the partition of the island into two states, the twenty-six-county Free State (which became a republic in 1949) and the six-county province of Northern Ireland, or Ulster, which remained British. A civil war broke out between the pro-treaty and anti-treaty factions in the Free State. When it ended, the pro-treaty faction formed the political party which now leads the coalition that is in power, Fine Gael (Family of Ireland), and the anti-treaty faction formed Fianna Fail (Soldiers of Destiny), the present party of opposition.

Fianna Fail has always been the "greener" party, the one with the harder nationalist position. When a Fine Gael cabinet member raised the issue of dropping Articles 2 and 3 from the Constitution, Fianna Fail representatives quickly retorted that that no such large concessions should be made to the British or to the Unionists until they were ready to give much more on Northern Ireland, perhaps to give up British sovereignty over the province entirely. If Fianna Fail were to campaign against the abolition of the two articles, they might easily succeed with the public—unless the British simultaneously were to offer significant powers to Northern Nationalists.

According to a recent poll, the FitzGerald government has hit an all-time low in popularity, and would lose to Fianna Fail if an election were held today. Another poll revealed that 75 percent of the Irish people believe that the two Irelands should be united. A breakthrough on the Northern Ireland front would provide a much-needed boost to the morale of the country, and no doubt to FitzGerald's popularity as well. For several years FitzGerald has been more popular personally with the Irish public than Charles J. Haughey, the rough-hewn leader of Fianna Fail, although Haughey's party has always been the more powerful one.

The principal reason for FitzGerald's drop in the polls is the state of Ireland's economy. Unemployment is 16 percent, and those who are employed are laboring under drastic austerity measures, including a crippling tax burden that was imposed in an effort to pay off a huge national debt that keeps growing like Topsy as the Irish pound declines against the dollar. Ironically, it was the free-spending policy of the Fianna Fail administration between 1977 and 1981 that greatly increased the national debt. But the Irish, like the Americans, want to whup the fellow who is in power when taxes are levied, no matter who it was who got them into debt in the first place. Last August FitzGerald did not help his image with the public when, after authorizing an unpopular government decision to reduce food subsidies, he headed off for a vacation in France.

One of the more arcane casualties of the government's austerity program is a huge airport that was planned for the west of Ireland. The airstrip, which was meant to bring pilgrims in by jumbo jet to the shrine of Knock, where the Virgin Mary was seen by several people in 1879, was being built on top of a mountain that is shrouded in mists for much of the year. The jetport was a source of great amusement to the population outside Knock. People began saying that the strip was being built to give the Virgin Mary a place to land should she ever return to Knock. It seemed a safe enough political decision for the FitzGerald government to stop public funds for the airstrip.

And so there it lies, an unfinished runway in the clouds. In some ways it seems a fitting metaphor for the state of Ireland now in this wet and windy season, waiting for a miraculous turn of events. To be sure, the work of the New Ireland Forum and all that has followed it in Ireland's dealings with the British do represent progress toward solving the ancient Northern Ireland problem. But the frustration for the Irish goverment is that all their patient efforts at negotiation may still not be enough.

MARY BREASTED

Mary Breasted is a writer living in Ireland. Her latest novel is *I Shouldn't Be Telling You This* (Harper & Row).

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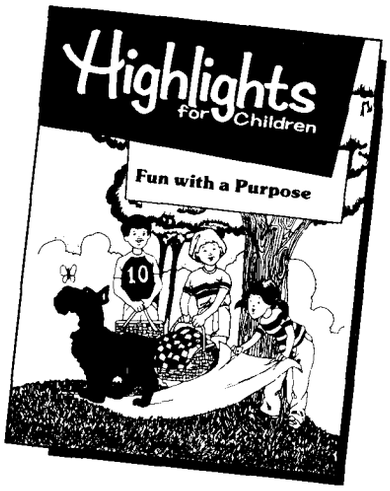

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Reagan plays the plodder, Mondale the Communicator.

TRADING PLACES

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

Louisville

A WEEK BEFORE the Presidential debate, officials of the Reagan campaign began distributing their post-debate talking points. Walter Mondale was mean, they said, he was petty, he had gone beyond the bounds of decency in his personal attacks on the President. Not only had Reagan gained stature, if that were possible, but Mondale had become the incredible shrinking man; he had vanished. It was no contest.

The intention of the Reagan campaign all along has been to foster the impression that time is standing still even as time is passing. Nothing is happening; therefore everything is fine. America is a still-life landscape, a tableau against which a timeless Reagan hails the old "new patriotism" and the new "old values." The President's campaign has been an effort to prevent him from truly campaigning, from being tested by the press and the voters. His huge lead contributed to the air of permanent stability. Only in remote, unaccountable places like Lebanon was the scenery failing to cooperate with the scenario.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the meantime, the Mondale campaign maintained a furious pace without visible effect. The candidate's aides counseled the press that this was the warm-up. In fact, at every stage in the race, his handlers had explained that the campaign hadn't really started. After the California primary, Mondale retreated to North Oaks, Minnesota, to select a running mate. Now, it was explained, the campaign was beginning. The parade of politicians communicated a message of politics as usual, and the candidate plummeted in the polls. Not to worry. The campaign, it was explained, hadn't begun. It would start with the convention. Then Mondale picked Geraldine Ferraro and delivered a stirring acceptance speech. He rose in the polls. Then he went fishing, and sank. It was explained that the campaign would begin after the Republican Convention. On the official opening day, Labor Day, Mondale trekked down a Fifth Avenue so eerily deserted it looked as though a neutron bomb had been dropped by his advance team. This was a false start, it was explained. The campaign would begin with the debate. "It's still early," a senior adviser nervously suggested.

Mondale's managers knew from virtually all polls that most voters disagreed with Reagan's positions on most issues. And Mondale campaigned on all of the particulars. He assembled a collection of issues just as he had constructed a coalition of constituency groups. But the issues were not the issue. Reagan was vulnerable, but seemingly untouchable. In order to reach his weak points on the separate issues, one had to crack through his personality. Reagan was so far out of the Democrat's grasp that his monarchial style offered Mondale an issue: the President is isolated. His remoteness is not merely physical, but mental; he is

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out of touch, lacking mastery over the significant detail of issues required to govern. In other words, Reagan is not Mondale. The polls were unmoved.

During his debate preparation, Mondale grappled with the elusive target. Lewis Kaden, a Columbia Law School professor, and Michael Sovern, Columbia University's president, acted out the Reagan role, reading scripts composed of his actual words. Mondale stumbled when confronted with a star-studded cast of generalities, aphorisms, and anecdotes. Frustrated, he turned to Patrick Caddell, who was last sighted as Gary Hart's strategist. Caddell whispered one word to Mondale—"themes." The candidate had no distinct identity in the minds of most voters, partly because he jumped from issue to issue without explaining a unifying idea. "Themes" are the thread tying issues together, as Reagan has demonstrated. Caddell reinforced those in the Mondale camp who already favored something like his approach.

OVER AT THE White House, Reagan practiced with his 1980 sparring partner, David Stockman, the ultimate number-cruncher, who played Mondale as a mean character trying to tie Reagan's shoelaces together. The Reagan of these sessions was not the Reagan of the Mondale mock debates. That one rarely recited a fact. But the President's advisers, perpetually angst-ridden over Reagan's instinct for errors, decided to armor-plate him with statistics. For weeks he memorized the numbers given him. He would prove that he wasn't "out of touch"; he would be the commander in chief of all the numbers. To win, he had only to cross a scheduled ninety-minute window of vulnerability without a gaffe. During the debate, he had to sustain the sensation that nothing is happening. If he knew his figures there would be no gaffe. The big event would be a nonevent.

But time never stands still. Reagan's serenity makes him seem strangely inert. The drama of debate empowers the players with opportunity, and it builds on a series of unfolding revelations. An illusion of eternity intensifies the surprise when there is another act.

The debate shaped up as a campaign in miniature. First there was the Expectations Game. The Great Communicator, it was widely believed, was so overwhelming a performer that Mondale would have difficulty standing on the same stage. Reagan could lose only by napping at the podium, and even that could be blamed on Mondale's boring manner. The Expectations Game would be followed by the encounter itself, whose meaning would largely depend on the next event—the Interpretation Game. The media analysts would influence public perceptions, which would set the scene for the next act.

By the time the candidates arrived at the Kentucky Center for the Arts in Louisville, they had traded places. Reagan was ready to be more like Mondale; Mondale was primed to resemble Reagan. To a great extent, they both succeeded. Each purloined the other's techniques. Reagan came down from the ideological heights to the valley of details, while Mondale climbed halfway up a peak. Reagan discovered why Mondale was so far down; and Mondale caught a panoramic glimpse for the first time.

When Reagan tried to be Reagan, his script confounded him. As usual, he attempted to speak directly to the unseen television audience, transcending those immediately facing him. But he was not fully in command of his statistics; he didn't use the details to illustrate the larger points. The fact that he knew them *was* the point. Mondale's rhetorical strategy, on the other hand, was to take what Reagan had just said and analyze it on the spot. This method gave him the aura of spontaneous insight. His engagement contrasted sharply with Reagan's disengagement.

FROM THE BEGINNING of the debate, Mondale controlled its terms. "You must master the facts," he said, defining Presidential leadership. And Reagan obliged by cranking out more facts. He also rolled out his old reliable chestnut, big government, the source of all evil, but he couldn't adapt it to the demands of the debate. "What is your program for America for the next decade, with some specificity?" he was asked. "Continue to try and get things that we didn't get," he replied. Invited to run on The Future, he declined. He claimed his successes, but didn't weave the theme through his answer. He never explained his method, creating the sense that his successes are due to luck and magic. But when the magic leaves him, however momentarily, disbelief cannot easily be suspended. His thematic blankout allowed Mondale to appear fresh.

It was on the big government theme that Mondale scored one of his most impressive coups. Asked about religion and abortion, Reagan informed us that he doesn't attend church because terrorists might blow it up. ("I think the Lord understands.") And that women who have abortions are murderers. Mondale used the same occasion to seize the banner of traditional liberty. It was Reagan, not Mondale, who wanted big government to "intervene in the most private and personal questions in American life. That's where government should not be."

Reagan's greatest and perhaps most unremarked-upon blunder came when Mondale, with the flat affect of prairie humor, retrieved the Democratic Party for himself, noting that in 1960, when he was heading up Minnesotans for Kennedy, "Reagan was chairman of a thing called Democrats for Nixon." The President, who holds conservative ideology above party loyalty, overcompensated. By declaring that he had voted for Eisenhower, he demonstrated the insincerity of his role as a Democrat for Nixon and the general disingenuousness of his claim to the Democratic mantle.

Reagan suddenly forged ahead, pulling out his rusty sword, "There you go again," prompting Mondale to explain patiently to him that it was a rerun and that he got his facts wrong the first time. Mondale did this firmly and without a trace of meanness. Reagan looked slightly bewildered. Where's the beef?

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Then Mondale stole the most trustworthy and valuable Reagan theme of all—niceness. When asked to damn his opponent, Mondale said he *liked* him, saying he deserved "credit" for "good morale." By giving Reagan his due, Mondale implicitly called for his retirement. The praise was the rhetorical equivalent of a gold watch.

At last came the closing statements. Reagan reminded us that four years ago he asked, "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" He reeled off twenty-five statistics, many proving that there are a lot of people living in poverty. Without a transition he launched into a digression about "spare parts" and the defense budget—much of which, he explained, went for "food and wardrobe." *Wardrobe?* What about sound effects? How about Edith Head for Quartermaster General? Then he hailed "optimism" and "patriotism."

Mondale's closing statement turned Reagan's final premise on its head. Reagan apparently was trying to ask: "What have you done for me lately?" Mondale's underlying question was: *"What will you do for me tomorrow?"* He touched the familiar issues of special concern to the major constituencies. But he did something new. He extolled the tradition of the new, borrowing the slogans of Gary Hart and the cadence of John F. Kennedy: "I believe that if we ask those questions that bear on our future—not just congratulate ourselves but challenge us to solve those problems—you'll see that we need new leadership . . . I would rather lose a campaign about decency than win a campaign about self-interest." The earthbound Mondale suddenly took flight. And he made a pinpoint ideological strike against the "new patriotism," a static self-satisfied dogma, in the name of dynamic, unfulfilled ideals: "President Kennedy once said in response to similar arguments, we are great but we can be greater."

BANG! As though they were at the Churchill Downs starting gate, the pack of reporters raced off to the candidates to play the Interpretation Game. Over at the Hyatt, Reagan's previously confident managers turned into an alibi team. The debate, they explained, wasn't that important after all, it was inconclusive, Reagan was still on top, never mind. They cautioned prudent investors of the press not to make any rash moves: the market is stable. Over at the Seelbach Hotel bar, Mondale aides stood leaning against the walls, blinking their eyes in astonishment at the scene before them. It was a frenzied bull market, with orders for Mondale pouring in. *Buy! Buy! Buy!* The ticker couldn't keep up with the demand. Opinion was uniform—the gipper had become the geezer. Sell Reagan! *Sell! Sell!* "At least," said a Mondale aide, "we won't have a race anymore between a giant and a dishrag."

The telephone in Mondale's suite started ringing and didn't stop. Democratic politicians who had spent weeks devising elaborate ways to separate themselves from him were now curious about his schedule. Who was this Mondale? In the overnight ratings, Mondale was the victor. And, more important, his favorability ratings climbed about ten points. And that was before the full imprint of the press interpretation could be made on public opinion. Something had happened: in one hundred minutes Walter Mondale dashed all hopes of a Reagan-induced realignment; the Republican Party passed its high water mark the instant Reagan began his opening remarks.

MONDALE LIBERATED the Democratic Party from doom, but he didn't completely free himself from political confusion. In a debate peroration, he drew the distinction between the smug celebration of the "new patriotism" and the "challenges" of "new leadership."

But his theme is threatened by the deficit issue, which is a parody of a vision. In the debate, Reagan rightly noted that Mondale had once supported deficits "because they stimulate the economy and help reduce unemployment." Reagan ought to know; his recovery is buoyed by a perverse Keynesian stimulus. Mondale's principled position against deficits echoes the gloomy Hooverian Republicans, whose political failure to benefit from the issue spanned almost fifty years. Mondale's insistence that the deficit is "the dominant domestic issue of our time" lends credibility to Reagan's hollow "optimism." The only way people can participate in this "challenge" is by paying taxes. Mondale's passionate attachment to the issue reflects his thralldom to the policy wonks and wise men of the Washington establishment. To the extent that he follows their narrow line, his vision will be blinkered. In the meantime, he scores points by running against the "out-of-touch" incumbent.

Reagan was upset in the debate, ultimately, by the internal logic of his Presidency. His evident failure to master many of the details of governing prompted his aides to program him to prove his mastery. That they felt compelled to do so documents his lack of such control. And in his attempt to demonstrate his knowledge of the nuts and bolts of modern bureaucratic government, Reagan proved precisely the opposite.

The facts matter not because of their literal meaning. Rather Reagan's disengagement from them suggests a contradiction between image and reality. Most Americans believed before the debate that because Reagan was in control of himself, he was in control of government. But if he is oblivious to the necessary detail he may not be in control of the crucial decision-making. He may be "out of touch" with controlling reality. When Reagan retreats behind his campaign shield of photo opportunities, generic speeches, and television advertisements, the cognitive dissonance only intensifies. His recovered balance can be dismissed as attributable to his controlled environment. His charm may arouse suspicion. And the Great Communicator may communicate an uneasy feeling of manipulation. Let Reagan be Reagan? After the debate, we know that the produced Reagan is not the authentic Reagan. What we see is not what we get.

What happens when Teflon is scratched? Everything sticks. □

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Why the Pentagon's spending spree doesn't make us much stronger.

REAGAN'S STRATEGY GAP

BY JEFFREY RECORD

ALTHOUGH MANY Americans today are without doubt better off economically than they were four years ago, it is far from self-evident—notwithstanding Reagan Administration claims—that the nation is militarily more secure. Nor is it obvious that what has passed for a national defense debate in this election year will do much to enlighten the public about the complex issues of America's military security.

In order to understand these issues, it is critical to begin at the most fundamental level. Military security is relative to time, place, and circumstance. It presumes the presence of specific political interests on behalf of which one is prepared to go to war. It further presumes the presence of specific threats to those interests. Most important, it requires strategy, which the late Sir Basil Liddell Hart defined as "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy." Strategy, in turn, presumes finite military means, and thus the need and capacity to distinguish between the desirable and the possible, the essential and the expendable. A strategy whose goals far exceed resources available to implement them is a recipe for disaster. "He who attempts to defend too much," observed Frederick the Great, "defends nothing."

To possess more military power is not necessarily to be more secure, since it might not be power enough, or power of the right kind, to "fulfill the ends of policy." The combination of unlimited ends and limited means ultimately brought down Napoleon and Hitler. Nor is success guaranteed by a level of military power commensurate with military ends, since military power is constantly subject to misapplication in the stress, chaos, and uncertainties of combat—what Clausewitz called "the friction" of actual war. In 1940 the French had more and better tanks than the Germans, and the United States had more than adequate military means to prevail in Vietnam and to rescue its diplomats held hostage in Tehran.

In the particular case of the Reagan Administration's military policies, one must first understand what happened to American military power in the decade preceding President Reagan's inauguration. The 1970s witnessed both a relative and absolute decline in U.S. military power. A dangerously wide gap between the nation's military obligations and capacity to fulfill them was the result. To be sure, since the formation of NATO in 1949 and the subsequent extension of U.S. military guarantees to no fewer than nine countries in the Far East and Southeast Asia, the United States had never maintained the military wherewithal to wage a major conflict in Europe and in Asia at the same time. (The conflict in Vietnam, though regarded as a "half-war" by Pentagon force planners, directly or indirectly engaged the bulk of U.S. first-line ground and tactical air forces and delayed their scheduled modernization for a full decade.) The disparity between commitments and capabilities was tolerable as long as the United States retained a pronounced intercontinental and theater nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union, and as long as the Soviet Union itself was believed to be either unable or unwilling to challenge the United States in two or more military theaters simultaneously.

By 1980, however, U.S. nuclear superiority had vanished. The ongoing expansion and modernization of Soviet ground, naval, and tactical air forces—a buildup that began in the late 1960s while U.S. military resources were being depleted in Vietnam—raised the distinct prospect of concurrent military challenges to American interests overseas. Moreover, the United States failed to keep pace with that buildup. During the 1970s Congress and successive Administrations, traumatized by the Vietnam War and captivated by the promise of a lasting détente with the Soviet Union, presided over a contraction of U.S. military power to levels well below those of 1964, the year preceding commitment of the first U.S. combat units to Vietnam. During the decade U.S. defense expenditures in real terms (i.e., adjusted to offset inflation) actually declined by almost 25 percent. As a percentage of the gross national product, defense spending declined from 8.2 percent to 5.2 percent. The size of the U.S. fleet shrank from 752 warships to 473. The Army temporarily lost three of its sixteen divisions; and the number of Air Force tactical combat aircraft dwindled from almost 3,300 to less then 2,400.

Nuclear forces did not fare much better. No Administration, Democratic or Republican, succeeded in countering the Soviets' increasing ability to target U.S. land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. In the view of candidate Reagan and his supporters in 1980 the United States was endangered by the famous "window of vulnerability" through which the Soviets might be tempted to launch an attack in the event of a superpower confrontation. Long-overdue modernization of the bomber "leg" of the so-

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called strategic triad of missiles, bombers, and submarines was thwarted by the Carter Administration's cancellation of the B-1 program, compelling continued reliance on a rapidly deteriorating fleet of B-52s.

No less disturbing was the Carter Administration's dramatic expansion of military ends in the 1980 declaration that committed the United States to the defense of the entire Persian Gulf region. Since the Carter Doctrine was not accompanied by a commensurate expansion in the U.S. force levels (the so-called Rapid Deployment Force remains little more than a headquarters), the doctrine served only to widen further the gap between U.S. military means and ends.

THE HEART of the Reagan Administration's military program is a determination to reverse the unfavorable trends of the 1970s. The Administration made war on what it perceived to be a poverty of military means, in a manner reminiscent of Lyndon Johnson's earlier war on economic poverty. Unlike the Nixon Administration, however, which sought to close the gap between U.S. military obligations and resources by reducing the former (notably by redefining U.S. defense commitments in Asia), the Reagan Administration has not questioned the military obligations it inherited, including those Carter so casually undertook in the Persian Gulf. Indeed, President Reagan has sought to commit U.S. military power to places, such as the eastern Caribbean and Lebanon, that preceding Administrations left alone.

The Reagan Administration has focused exclusively on expanding means rather than on limiting ends. The Administration during the past four years accordingly has requested—and received—real increases in defense expenditure amounting to 41 percent. The defense budget now consumes some 6.5 percent of the gross national product. For fiscal year 1985, the Administration has requested a record budget of $305 billion (compared, in 1985 dollars, to the Carter Administration's 1980 budget of $192 billion) which, if approved, would raise even further the Pentagon's share of the gross national product.

If increases in the defense budget were synonymous with increases in U.S. military security, the Reagan Administration could convincingly claim that Americans are better off—far better off—militarily than they were four years ago. Unfortunately, the Administration's military program rests on three highly suspect premises. The first is that America's post-World War II military ills, and especially those of the 1970s, can be attributed primarily if not solely to a lack of *enough* military power. The second is that more military power can be had by simply giving the Pentagon more money. And the third is that U.S. military requirements should be calculated on the need for a simultaneous defense of U.S. interests around the world. These premises reflect a misunderstanding of the essence of military strategy. They demonstrate a failure to recognize the profound organizational and institutional flaws within and outside the Pentagon as well. These deficiencies not only encourage a misapplication of available military power but also make it virtually impossible to translate real increases in defense expenditure into comparable increases in military power.

TO BE SURE, it is, *ceteris paribus*, better to have more military power than less. But the first premise, that more military power alone will enhance the military well-being of the United States, does not necessarily follow. Quality is at least as important as quantity. The acid test of the military is how effectively it performs on the battlefield, not how much money it can wring from politicians in peacetime.

During this century the United States, alone or in combination with chosen allies, has always enjoyed a pronounced superiority of military resources over its wartime enemies. Yet not since MacArthur's landing at Inchon in 1950 has the United States enjoyed a major unqualified military success. Inchon was followed by the rout of American forces along the Yalu River; by the Bay of Pigs fiasco; by disaster in Indochina; by the seizure of the U.S.S. *Pueblo* by North Korea; by the abortive assault on Koh Tang Island in search of the crew of the hijacked *Mayaguez*; by the bungled attempt to rescue the hostages in Tehran; and by the decimation of a Marine battalion in Beirut by a lone terrorist. (The ability of some 8,000 soldiers and Marines to prevail over a few hundred Cubans on Grenada can hardly be regarded as a major military success. Reports persist that the invasion of that tiny island was marred by serious professional mistakes and failures that against a more formidable foe would have invited disaster.)

Each of these miscarriages stemmed not from lack of military power, but rather from its misapplication. And the blame for the misapplication of power lies in unaddressed organizational and institutional obstacles that are more or less immune to budgetary resolution. Prominent among those problems are excessive political intrusion upon the planning and execution of military operations; a Joint Chiefs of Staff so organized as to guarantee the triumph of parochial service interests over the common military weal; and a system of military service that denies to the military a proportional share of the talents of the great American middle class.

There are other debilitating influences on U.S. military effectiveness. Highly centralized personnel management continually shuffles officers and men from unit to unit and job to job; this corrodes small unit cohesion on the battlefield. Education and promotion systems encourage allegiance to the values of administrative efficiency rather than those of combat effectiveness. And operational doctrines oriented toward firepower and attrition take no account of the Soviets' ability to absorb and inflict greater losses than U.S. forces; they ought to have been discarded long ago. Moreover, common to all services has been the pursuit of technology for its own sake, a pursuit manifest in design philosophies and procurement procedures that relentlessly serve up unnecessarily complex and costly weapons that cannot be

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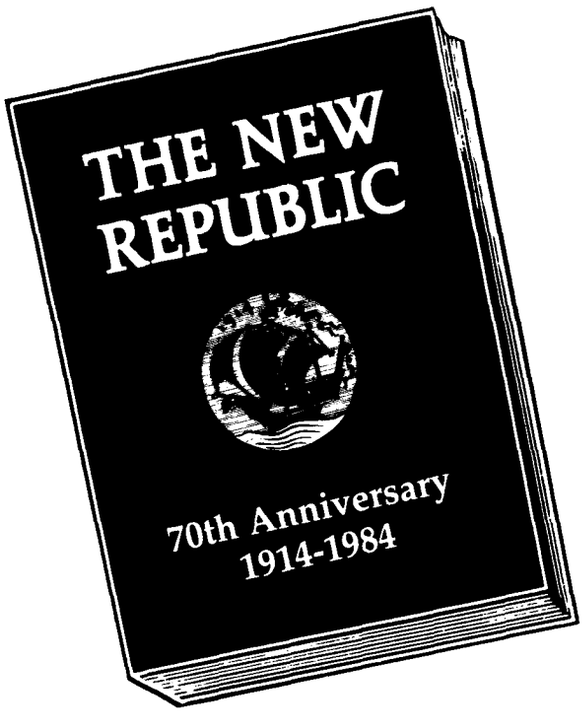
"Don't give up the ship."



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purchased in sufficient numbers or properly maintained.

Most of these deficiencies have gone unrecognized by the Reagan Administration, which seems not to understand that more military power is of dubious value if it cannot be employed effectively. To be sure, during the past four years the Army has radically revised its fighting doctrine and undertaken measures to increase combat unit cohesion; the quality of recruits joining all the services has dramatically improved; Congress is now considering legislation to reform the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization; and unnecessary political meddling in military planning and operations has been notably (and refreshingly) absent.

Yet, except for the last of these welcome developments, neither President Reagan nor his top lieutenants in the Pentagon can take much credit. The Army was headed down the path of doctrinal and manpower reform well before 1981, and improvements in the quality and tenure of recruits have stemmed at least as much from high levels of civilian unemployment in 1982 as they have from long overdue increases in pay and benefits. Moreover, the Reagan Administration is lukewarm about J.C.S. reform. The Administration can, of course, take full credit for obtaining substantial annual real increases in defense expenditure as well as for the politically difficult task of forging the public and Congressional consensus necessary to support them. Even Walter Mondale, who has called for cuts in defense spending totaling $25 billion (to be obtained in part by canceling the MX missile and B-1 bomber programs), endorses the need for continual annual real growth in defense budget authority.

YET THE Reagan defense consensus rests largely on the second assumption, also far from self-evident: that real increases in defense expenditure will yield real increases in military power of a magnitude to justify the investment. The record of the past four years seem to refute that assumption, at least in terms of the measurable indices of military power.

What hath the Reagan Administration's 41 percent increase in real defense expenditure of the past four years actually wrought in the way of additional usable military power? In the category of strategic nuclear forces—the centerpiece of the Administration's military program—the past four years has witnessed an actual decline in force levels. Notwithstanding massive infusions of money and a determination to reduce the unfavorable strategic nuclear trends of the 1970s, the window of American vulnerability to a Soviet first strike has remained open. The number of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles has dropped from 1,052 to 1,031, with the phasing out of the aging Titan force. Nor would the MX program measurably reduce the vulnerability of the U.S. land-based I.C.B.M. force to a Soviet first strike: the Administration's plan to deploy the new missiles in fixed silos (in contrast to the Carter Administration's mobile basing scheme) would make them little more than sitting ducks in the event of war. The number of U.S. intercontinental nuclear bombers also has declined, from 376 to 297, as aging B-52s have been retired from service in anticipation of the arrival of 100 B-1s. Only submarine-launched ballistic missiles have registered a modest increase, from 576 to 616.

In the category of land forces, the number of active U.S. Army and Marine Corps divisions has remained static at nineteen, although plans are afoot to create two small new light Army divisions. The number of people on active Army duty also has changed little, despite a 39 percent real increase in that service's budget over the past four years. Nor have U.S. tactical air forces (including those of the Navy and Marine Corps) expanded appreciably, despite a 60 percent real increase in the Air Force's budget since 1980. The total number of U.S. fighter-attack squadrons has risen from 164 to 165, and the number of fighter-attack aircraft themselves from 2,996 to 3,092, an increase of but 3 percent. Only in the category of naval power has significant expansion been recorded. The number of U.S. warships has grown from 473 to 513, and the Administration already has signed the additional contracts needed to achieve its declared goal of a 600-ship Navy by 1990. On balance, however, the Reagan Pentagon so far has gotten very little return on its investment in additional military power.

Where has all the money gone? Some of it, of course, was gobbled up in the form of cost-overruns and by contractors who charged the Pentagon hundreds of dollars apiece for tens of thousands of wrenches, screwdrivers, and stool caps. More went to the sizable real increases in pay and benefits that are repeatedly necessary to keep the all-volunteer force competitive in the civilian manpower market, and to finance an inexplicable increase of 10 percent in the size of an already bloated officer corps (thus further expanding one of the highest ratios of officers to enlisted men of any military establishment in the world).

Even more money was shoveled into an across-the-board and admittedly long overdue modernization of arms and equipment—into new, technologically advanced ships, planes, tanks, and a host of other weapons. In terms of technological sophistication, the Reagan Administration can justifiably claim that U.S. military forces today are markedly better armed than they were four years ago. Yet technological sophistication, especially if it entails the kind of unnecessary complexity characteristic of so many U.S. weapons, is not synonymous with military effectiveness. The history of technically complex weapons, particularly those whose development is attended by lax quality control and unrealistic testing procedures, has all too often been the history of weapons that are either unable to endure the rigors of combat or whose performance in combat falls far short of expectations. Moreover, complex weapons are comparatively costly to buy and to maintain, and therefore often cannot be purchased in the numbers required to sustain combat. Many end up pricing their way into cancellation, forcing the Pentagon to eat the millions and sometimes billions of dollars already invested in their research and development. Others, managing to make their way past a favorable procurement decision, are bought in small quantities

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likely to be quickly exhausted on the battlefield. The cost growth of the B-1 bomber, for example, compelled a reduction in the size of the program from 244 to 100 planes. This correlation among complexity, cost, and numbers accounts more than anything else for the Administration's inability to translate real increases in defense expenditure into even remotely comparable increases in force levels. What distinguishes the Reagan Administration from preceding Administrations is its refusal to recognize and accept the budgetary and operational implications of the complexity/cost/numbers dilemma. Indeed, the Reagan Pentagon has denounced or attempted to suppress analyses (such as those conducted by Defense Department procurement expert Franklin C. Spinney and by the conservative Heritage Foundation) that suggest the Administration is not receiving a worthwhile return on its massive investment in high-technology weaponry.

IT IS, however, in the realm of strategy—the coordination of ends and means—where the Reagan Administration's claim to have made America more militarily secure is weakest. Having misidentified the principal source of America's military ills as a lack of sufficient military power, and having failed to generate additional military power sufficient to fulfill the extensive military obligations it inherited (and never questioned), the Reagan Administation has nonetheless proceeded wholeheartedly to embrace a third erroneous premise: that U.S. military requirements should be calculated on the need for a declared "worldwide war" strategy. The essence of the strategy was expressed by Secretary of Defense Weinberger in his annual statement to the Congress of 1983: "Given the Soviets' capability to launch simultaneous attacks in [the Persian Gulf], NATO, and the Pacific, our long-range goal is to be capable of defending all theaters simultaneously." If actually executed in the event of war with the Soviet Union, such a strategy would virtually guarantee a misapplication of U.S. military power that could lead to the defeat of U.S. forces worldwide.

Let us leave aside the fact that a multifront war with the Soviet Union is hardly the most likely threat to U.S. security, and that an overriding focus on such a war promotes force structures and weaponry ill suited for the kinds of war the United States has actually fought since 1945 and is likely to fight in the future. Let us also leave aside the fact that the strategic interests of the Soviet Union, which has a historic dread of two-front wars, might not be served by simultaneous attacks on American positions in two or more geographically separate fronts.

The aim of "defending all theaters simultaneously" is simply beyond the present and projected military resources of the United States. A two- or three-front war against a numerically superior adversary enjoying the advantages of interior lines of communications would risk a dangerous dispersion of U.S. forces in the face of a larger and more compact adversary. As such, it is not a strategy at all. On the contrary, it is a reflection of the absence of strategy.

TO BE SURE, in World War II the United States and its Allies survived a string of disastrous initial defeats and went on to prevail simultaneously in Europe and the Far East. It should be recalled, though, that victory was achieved after four years and a level of defense expenditure that at one point approached 40 percent of the gross national product. We had the time and the geographic isolation to mobilize, two commodities that probably will not be available to the United States in a conflict with the Soviet Union, if for no other reason than that the side that began to lose the war could be driven to use nuclear weapons (such, indeed, is the essence of NATO's own doctrine of nuclear first use). Moreover, victory in Europe during World War II would have been impossible without the assistance of two other world powers, one of whose efforts alone accounted for the destruction of well over one-half of Germany's military forces. In the next world war the vast industrial and human resources of one of those powers, the Soviet Union, will be arrayed against the United States, while the relative military weight of the other, Great Britain, has dwindled drastically since 1945.

In sum, it is not at all evident that the United States is militarily more secure today than it was four years ago. A great deal of money has been thrown at the Pentagon; but it has been thrown more or less indiscriminately. The Pentagon as an organization is ill equipped to translate the money into comparable increases in effective military power, in part because it is guided by a declared strategy that lacks a firm sense of priorities. Luckily, the Soviet Union has so far refrained from challenging U.S. military commitments overseas in a manner that would impose upon the United States the full penalty for its continuing failure to bring its military obligations and resources into reasonable alignment. Perhaps the Soviet military, too, is overcommitted and hobbled by institutional deficiencies.

As for the future, prospects for breaking the organizational and institutional shackles on U.S. military effectiveness are not encouraging, even though more effective and not larger military forces would seem to serve the nation's security interests better at this juncture in American history. National defense *is* a prominent issue in this year's Presidential race. But the principal bone of contention separating President Reagan and Walter Mondale is the *size* of the defense budget. Both are committed to annual real increases in defense budget authority, although Mondale would hold such increases to 3 or 4 percent, reallocate money from nuclear to conventional programs, and increase investment in conventional force readiness. Both accept America's extensive overseas military obligations as more or less given, although Mondale is wary of increasing U.S. military involvement in Central America. And neither has manifested much interest in organizational, institutional, and doctrinal reforms that would enhance U.S. military *effectiveness*. It would seem that Mondale, no less than Reagan, believes that the real issue is how *much* military power is enough. As such, the national defense debate of 1984 is worse than a dialogue of the deaf. It is a spat among the blind. □

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If war comes, will we be prepared?

READY OR NOT

BY LES ASPIN

CONSIDER THE following pair of apparent paradoxes: Joseph Addabbo, chairman of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, wants to cut defense spending—and says military readiness is insufficient. Caspar Weinberger, the Secretary of Defense, wants to increase defense spending dramatically—and says readiness is just fine. Who's right?

The Reagan Administration's own budget figures show an average annual real growth in spending on equipment readiness of more than 14 percent. That's probably more than liberals, strong advocates of readiness, would have devoted to it if Ronald Reagan had not won the White House in 1980. The complaint, however, is not so much with "input," dollars spent, as with "output," the actual state of combat readiness. Although the Administration is spending much more for readiness, the statistics we traditionally use to measure readiness, with only a few exceptions, show little or no improvement. There is considerable room to question Weinberger's claims to have done great things for readiness.

For example, if we look at the numerical readiness ratings, or C-ratings, for combat units, we find that the percentage of units in the top two readiness categories increased by only a single percentage point from 1980 to 1984. If we look at "mission capable" rates—the proportion of equipment that is in sufficient repair to carry out its assigned mission—we find a dramatic increase in the readiness of naval aircraft, but nothing else. In fact, if you measure the other twelve categories of equipment, you find the average mission capable rate improved by a single percentage point from 1980 to 1984.

The C-rating and mission capable rates are considered by the military to be the key numerical measures of readiness. There are also ancillary measures based on such statistics as training time—the number of hours that pilots fly, the number of days that ships sail, and the number of days that ground units train. Air Force flying hours are up, but the increase is canceled by the decline in Navy and Army flying hours. Ship-sailing days are up 8 percent, but Army training days are static. Taken as a whole, these ancillary measures don't show much improvement.

When we turn to manpower measurements, we find dramatic improvements all across the board. Only 93 percent of the recruiting goal was reached in 1979; in 1983 the goal was oversubscribed at 101 percent. In the same period, the proportion of recruits with high school diplomas rose from 65 percent to 81 percent, and the proportion with low I.Q. scores plummeted from 30 percent to 8 percent (compared to about 31 percent in the youth population as a whole with the same range of scores).

In sum, only two categories show dramatic improvements: personnel, where much of the improvement is a direct result of the Reagan recession and Navy aircraft readiness. But the General Accounting Office recently reviewed the Navy calculations and found major defects; it concluded that "actual rates were lower than reported—perhaps significantly so." The bottom line looks pretty unimpressive when put next to the dramatic increases in readiness funding each year under Reagan.

With such massive inputs, why such puny outputs? There are four possibilities: the money was wasted, improvements take time and are still in the pipeline, the problem was so bad that it takes a massive infusion just to keep readiness from declining further, the measurements used to determine readiness are no good. There is some truth in all of these theories.

Whenever one discusses the military, or any other large bureaucracy, waste is inevitable. A G.A.O. study a few years ago looked at how Air Force commanders spent construction money put at their disposal. The study showed many commanders deciding to fund projects with a low priority before they funded programs that the Air Force itself gave a top priority. Then there is the admirals' dining room in the Pentagon, where, because of the gross overstaffing, it costs $33 to produce a Reuben sandwich. Still, we are talking about a 14 percent per year increase in spending on readiness. That amounts, after inflation, to a *doubling* of the resources devoted to the key readiness areas of spare parts and central maintenance. Even the Pentagon can't squander sums of that magnitude.

Changes do not show up immediately after they are made. A major component of readiness is the availability of spare parts. It takes about eighteen months from the time an order is placed until spare parts begin to appear in the inventory. Still, after the Administration's forty-four months in office, one would expect to see some results.

It does take more money to stand still. For example, the large backlog of equipment waiting for repair in 1980 had grown still larger in 1984, but the percentage backlogged fell. The percentage backlogged would have grown if we had not provided more maintenance money. Furthermore, the Reagan program is pumping lots of new equipment into the forces. The real growth rate in spending for new equipment has been 16 percent a year since Reagan took office, slightly higher than the 14 percent growth for equipment readiness. Simple arithmetic shows it takes more money to keep the same proportion of equipment in repair. If 50 of 100 tanks are operable, you show a 50 percent mission capable rate. If you add 20 more tanks and boost maintenance resources by 20 percent, you should end up with 60 out of 120 tanks operable. But you are still at a 50 percent mission capable rate even with the added spending on readiness.

Les Aspin, Democratic Representative from Wisconsin, is a member of the House Armed Services Committee. Warren Nelson of the committee staff assisted with this article.

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There are good reasons for the claim that the measures we use are defective—statistical anomalies if one wants to be polite, or junk numbers if one does not. There is unquestionably a lot of room for tinkering. For example, in calculating the Navy aircraft mission capable rates, which the G.A.O. found to be defective, the Navy allowed squadrons to delete from the computational base those planes that were awaiting major repairs at a depot. In other words, if 10 percent of your squadron's planes couldn't be operated because of minor problems, you had a 90 percent mission capable rate. But if 10 percent of your planes were total duds, you were 100 percent mission capable.

These games of course tend to make rates higher than they should be, although sometimes there's pressure to decrease them. Several years ago, I inspected the weekly reports of several units in Germany. Every time a new company commander was named, the readiness rating of that company plummeted as the new commander looked for every defect he could find. In succeeding months, the unit's readiness rating would progressively climb higher—due, of course, to the skill and leadership qualities of the new company commander.

There are other statistical quirks that work against the Administration. For example, on taking office it decided that we ought to have larger stocks of certain war reserves. This had the effect of cutting readiness when measured statistically, since a unit with 100 percent of its war reserves on Monday had only 50 percent on Tuesday when the war reserve requirement was doubled. Also, as a unit gets new equipment—say, F-15 Eagles to replace aging F-4 Phantoms—its readiness status drops because it can't immediately master the use and maintenance of the new gear.

There are hundreds of similar examples, all of which show that the readiness statistics conceal as much as they convey. But there is even a more fundamental problem with these numbers: they really aren't measuring output. Budget dollars measure input; the Pentagon readiness statistics measure the level of effort, which is only a slightly less crude form of input. A squadron that flies more also wears out its aircraft faster; a squadron that gains more time in the air by flying in circles simply consumes more fuel. Flying hours and training days tell us the amount of time consumed, but not how that time has been spent.

Many important elements of readiness simply can't be measured statistically. Take the Grenada invasion. For the relatively modest level of fighting there, our troops were ready by all the traditional measures of readiness. Yet they did not have anything better than Xeroxed oil company maps to work with. Considering that Grenada was in our own backyard and had been a sore spot for five years, it is curious that an up-to-date map did not exist and that thousands had not been printed. That's one of the things we pay the Defense Mapping Agency to do. That was a readiness lapse that won't show up in any statistics.

EVEN IF the numbers measured readiness well, what would that mean? Our common approach to readiness is one-dimensional. It simply asks for more, assuming that more is better. Rather than simply funding more flying hours, we need to know what added proficiency will be gained from the added hours and cost. How much readiness is enough?

For more than a decade, liberals have castigated the Pentagon for shortchanging readiness; it is the one defense argument they have clearly won. But we need to understand that readiness is not *per se* a good thing. I would not want to see every U.S. Army division with a top C-rating. That would be sheer wastefulness. Some units need to be ready to go at a moment's notice, but not all of them. On the other hand, it is important that Navy ships be in a relatively high state of readiness. In 1975, when Defense Secretary James Schlesinger ordered all Navy units in the western Pacific to head for the Gulf of Thailand, where the *Mayaguez* had been captured, he was appalled to find that not a single vessel could make top speed because each had some propulsion system defect. That is far more disturbing than the fact that several U.S. Army divisons aren't prepared to face the Red Army tonight.

To the popular mind, the readiness statistics measure war-fighting capability, but they are in fact peacetime measures. George Patton never used C-ratings. When a unit had only 50 percent of its manpower (making it "not-combat capable" by today's definition), he wouldn't necessarily dismiss it from the force; but he would not expect it to hold as much of the frontline as a full-strength unit. Today a plane that should be able to fly 2,000 miles and drop 2,000 pounds of ordnance will not be rated mission capable if it can only make 1,000 miles carrying 1,000 pounds worth of ordnance—but that plane will still be used in a war; the squadron commander will just make sure it isn't assigned full-range targets. Just because every unit isn't 100 percent ready doesn't mean we are defenseless.

The one clear point to be made about readiness is that it is a murky subject. That said, I would add four cautionary notes to keep in mind whenever addressing the subject: first, don't worship at the altar of readiness. Yes, it is important, but one can have too much of a good thing. Liberals and conservatives alike are in danger of making a panacea of readiness. Second, don't be seduced by Pentagon statistics. There is a natural tendency to distrust them when they show good results and embrace them when they show bad results. But often they are just ground out by a system that generates numbers for the sake of generating numbers. Third, ask for some real measures of readiness. It is not how many hours a pilot puts in behind the joystick, but what he has learned. That requires a test of the pilot's skills—the "output" we hope we are getting for all the flying hours. Finally, demand to know why the Reagan Administration, after doubling its investment in readiness, can't show by its own statistics a higher level of effort in terms of flying hours and training days. The statistics may not measure readiness, but much of what they do measure—flying hours, training days, mission capable rates—should be a lot higher. We aren't seeing a lot for our money, which begs questions about the level of managerial competence in the Pentagon. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

American Scenes

The slightest acquaintance with filmmaking compels us to wonder how tone and style can ever be sustained through that disjointed, nonsequential, harassed-tedious process. The slightest acquaintance with filmgoing shows how rarely tone and style are achieved.

Stranger than Paradise
(Samuel Goldwyn)

Country
(Buena Vista)

Stranger than Paradise is one of those rarities. This American film was written and directed by Jim Jarmusch, 31, who was trained at the N.Y.U. graduate film school, who has done various jobs—sound-recording, photography, acting, and music scoring—and who has made one previous eighty-minute film (*Permanent Vacation*, not seen by me). *Stranger than Paradise* is in three subtitled parts: *The New World*, *One Year Later*, and *Paradise*. That first part was shown separately at a Rotterdam festival in 1983, where it won a prize. The completed film won prizes this year at the Cannes and Locarno festivals, has just been shown at the New York festival, and is now released. Jarmusch's chief accomplishment was to know the tone and visualize the style before he began, then—through all the hassling of film financing as well as filmmaking—to realize them.

That tone (we'll come to the style) is the opposite of the strenuous and eager-to-impress: it's cool, unhurried. The film itself seems to be "hanging out" with its three characters, who are doing the same. *Stranger than Paradise* was shot in black and white (adequately, by Tom DiCillo), on a budget that seems mimetic of its characters' circumstances, and with the same touches of humor and poignancy that surface in their lives. The tonal relationship between what we see and how we see it is exactly balanced.

A young loafer, played by John Lurie, lives alone in a scruffy New York apartment. He came from Hungary ten years before, and now declines to speak Hungarian with his aunt when she phones, declines to do anything much except lounge about, wear a fedora something like Karl Malden's, bet the horses, and play cards, where he apparently cheats. His friend, Richard Edson, is not conspicuously Hungarian but is otherwise a reduced replica. Lurie's cousin, Eszter Balint, 16 years old, arrives from Hungary, stays with him for a week, then moves on to join their aunt in Cleveland. A year later, Lurie and Edson win some money at cards, and decide to visit Balint at the aunt's (the elderly Cecilia Stark, who is the most vital person in the film, possibly because she's of an earlier generation). The two men leave for Florida, then decide to return to Cleveland and invite Balint to come south with them. She quickly accepts. In Florida they lose almost all their money at the dog races. Balint, because of a hat she has just bought, is handed an envelope full of money by a stranger who was waiting for a woman in a hat like that. The incident is as casually life-changing as most of the film is casually nonchanging. A mildly ironic ending follows.

The overall feeling of the film is of corks bobbing on a sluggish stream. The overall emotional tenor is expressed in one gesture: when the two men leave Balint in Cleveland (before they change their minds about inviting her), she almost—*almost*—waves goodbye. The very way that Jarmusch handles supposedly factual details—a ticket clerk in a small Florida airport says there's a nonstop flight to Budapest; when we see the plane, it looks just big enough to reach Jacksonville—is his comment on the demands of reality, mirroring his characters' attitudes.

The tone is neither hopeless nor pessimistic: either view would be too resolved. It's more as if these three people had acted out their lives before and are now doing a run-through for a director who wants to make sure they remember their parts in case of another performance. The effect of this approach, in contrast with the real world around them, is often funny. It's like lightweight Beckett, with the same patience on the part of tiny individuals toward a huge blundering universe, thus with glints of the same Beckettian humor.

Jarmusch's cinematic style gently but firmly completes the contradiction. The film is composed of episodes that finish with a moment of black before the next episode begins. It's a series of discrete utterances, like a series of proofs that the characters are still alive and moving. Further, more subtle yet equally affecting, each of these episodes is done in a single take. Sometimes the camera pans within an episode, but there is never a cut. This method, whose most

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Amadeus. Nonsense, biographically and thematically. But deftly executed, with some Mozart passages to hear, some gorgeousness to look at, and a good performance from F. Murray Abraham as Salieri. (Reviewed 10/22/84)

Bizet's Carmen. The best "orthodox" opera film that I know, writhing sinuously around the screen as Carmen herself does. All three principals sing well, Julia Migenes-Johnson also performs well. The whole familiar work sounds and looks fresh. (9/17&24/84)

Places in the Heart. Film clichés smudge this honestly intended memoir of a small-town Texas boyhood. But Robert Benton, who wrote and directed, understands the conflicts in Christian lives hobbled by worldly flaws. (10/1/84)

A Soldier's Story. Has the feel of a 1950s "liberal" film but is more smartly done. The murder of a black army sergeant on a Louisiana base in 1944 is investigated by a black captain, undeterred by black and white interference. (10/15/84)

SK

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famous practitioner is Jean Renoir and whose high priest is André Bazin, is closely associated with humanism, the conviction that human life is the apex of creation and that the filmmaker's obligation is to present it, not to intrude with idiosyncratic fragmentation. Yet the lives shown here are not the apex of anything much, and Jarmusch's wry twist is to treat them with Renoir's cinematic reverence and then to do his idiosyncratic fragmenting *between* the uninterrupted "Renoir" episodes. It's an intelligent, witty, conceptually complete piece of filmmaking, a dry commentary on the traditional view of glowing American immigrants.

A different contemporary America, differently seen. *Country* is loaded with talents, but they have to struggle with an obstacle they can't overcome: the script. Sam Shepard and Jessica Lange are an Iowa farm couple in the early 1980s who live and work on her family's place with her father, Wilford Brimley, and their children, a teenage boy, Levi L. Knebel, a younger girl, Therese' Graham, and a baby. All are excellent (including the baby, as far as one can judge). The director, Richard Pearce, has warm sympathy and a good eye for composition, particularly in some overhead shots that really contribute, rather than show off. The cinematographer, David M. Walsh, doesn't try to pretty up the flat terrain for our eyes, but he also conveys how it looks to the people who live there and cherish it.

William D. Wittliff's script, however, is a sorry business. At the beginning we see how farm people can get into severe trouble through loans from the F.H.A., and thus are at the mercy of F.H.A. officials as to whether they can keep their farms or not. It's a conflict between people whose fortunes depend on nature and people whose work is indoors, on computers. As soon as the battle lines are drawn and the inevitable conflict is foreseen, we look forward to that conflict—or, as they say in the trade, how they (the filmmakers) are going to get out of it.

Wittliff's script, either by his design or by subsequent meddlings, misses no trite development, no stale patch of dialogue, no Movieland response. And the script almost forgets to conclude. At the last moment an ex-official of the F.H.A. sticks in a line to give the stricken family hope, and a last printout on the screen gives us a 1984 court decision

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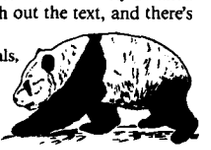
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that may help. All the heavy drama wallows toward a couple of Band-Aids.

But not before we have had, alas, Shepard hitting the bottle in despondency, hitting his wife after hitting the bottle, his disappearance and reappearance, the neighbor farmers gathering to protest a foreclosure auction. (The pale reminders of *The Grapes of Wrath* make *Country* look even more pallid.)

Yet, within this set of contrivances are some genuine pleasures. Brimley has mastered the small but happy art, as has Richard Farnsworth, of supplying old-codger honesty on demand. Knebel gives a strong, private performance of secrets, nurtured and growing. That phenomenon, Shepard, who finds time to be a masterly film star while also being our premier playwright, gives all possible lean vigor to a role that doesn't track. (Why, suddenly, is this man thought to be a bad farmer?) And Jessica Lange, who coproduced this film and who only eight years ago was struggling in King Kong's mighty mitt, gives the fullest humanity to a stock character—in some senses, a woman much like the one whom Sally Field plays in *Places in the Heart*, except that Lange has marital as well as money troubles to contend with.

Lange gives us the best moment, which could easily have been the worst. One night her small daughter, frightened by the family's troubles, takes the baby and climbs into bed with her older brother. Lange, holding herself together under many pressures, discovers all three of them sleeping in the older boy's bed, and her eyes fill. She cracks. She leans her forehead against the bedroom door and cries softly, a long time. The entire film comes closest to justification in the truth of that moment.

A passionate and perplexing chapter in black history.

MARCUS GARVEY'S MOMENT

BY LAWRENCE W. LEVINE

When Europe was inhabited by a race of cannibals, a race of savages, naked men, heathens and pagans, Africa was peopled with a race of cultured black men, who were masters in art, science and literature; men who were cultured and refined; men, who, it was said, were like the Gods. . . . Black men, you were once great; you shall be great again.

God made . . . no mistake when he made us black with kinky hair. . . . We have outgrown slavery, but our minds are still enslaved to the thinking of the Master Race. Now take these kinks out of your mind, instead of out of your hair. You are capable of all that is common to men of other races, so let us start now to build big business, commerce, industry and eventually a nation of our own to protect us wherever we choose to live.

The world has made being black a crime, . . . I hope to make it a virtue.

Words and goals like these enabled Marcus Garvey to capture the attention and the allegiance of hundreds of thousands of black men and women during the years following World War I, and to build, in his Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.), the first—and probably still the most significant—black mass movement in American history.

Born and raised in Jamaica, where he was trained as a printer, Garvey initially arrived in the United States in 1916 at the age of 28, lacking money, influence, or contacts. As an aspiring leader, Garvey had an even more profound difficulty to overcome: he had to bridge the cultural and political gulf between Jamaica and the United States and learn to understand and address the needs and aspirations of millions of American blacks. Garvey mastered these obstacles with remarkable speed and effectiveness.

In 1917 he established the New York Division of the U.N.I.A., which he had founded in Jamaica three years earlier in order to establish "a Universal Confraternity among the race," to promote "the spirit of race pride and love," to create "Agencies in the principal countries of the world for the protection of all Negroes irrespective of nationality," and to conduct "a world-wide commercial and industrial intercourse." By the mid-1920s, the U.N.I.A. had more than 700 branches in thirty-eight states in every section of the country (including the Deep South) and another 200 branches in the West Indies, Central and South America. In 1918 Garvey established his paper, the *Negro World*, which by the early '20s had a weekly circulation of between 50,000 and 200,000 and was read as far away as Africa, where in 1921 Jomo Kenyatta credited it with helping to nourish "Africans hungry for some doctrine which lifted them from the servile consciousness in which Africans lived."

In 1919 Garvey purchased an auditorium on 138th Street in Harlem, renamed it Liberty Hall, and held nightly meetings where his great eloquence transformed listeners into followers. Within a few years, he could address his fellow blacks in Liberty Halls in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Los Angeles. In that same year, Garvey offered 200,000 shares of stock at $5 a share to black people, established the Negro Factories Corporation, which was soon operating three grocery stores, two restaurants, a printing plant, a steam laundry, and a clothing factory. At the same time Garvey organized the Black Star Line, also financed by the sale of $5 stocks to his followers. Within a year the line had raised $610,000, owned three ships, and began to carry out its ultimately unsuccessful scheme of transporting passengers and cargo between the United States, the West Indies, and Africa. In the early '20s there were times when the U.N.I.A. and its corporations employed over 1,000 blacks in the United States. "Girls who could only be washer women in your homes, we made clerks and stenographers," Garvey told white America. "You will see from the start we tried to dignify our race."

Garvey's impressive achievements have led biographers to credit him with restoring to the black man "the masculinity stolen from him during the centuries of slavery," with putting "steel in the spine of many Negroes" and helping "to destroy their inferiority com-

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plex," and with instilling in millions of American blacks "a fierce race consciousness." It should be possible to give Garvey his due without conjuring up generations of self-hating, emasculated American blacks who needed to be given a sense of race consciousness. Indeed, how could black men and women, living in the profoundly racist society prevailing in early twentieth-century America, not have possessed race consciousness? Garvey's ability to rise so suddenly and attract so substantial a following was directly related to the degree of pride, strength, and sense of community that had continued to exist among Afro-Americans in the United States during their torturous years of slavery and their precarious half-century of freedom. Garvey's considerable contribution was to provide American blacks a political channel and a global perspective for their feelings of identity and community.

GARVEY was able to do this in part because of the timing of his trip to the United States. Following the Civil War, the freedmen had placed their hopes in the political process which had produced three constitutional amendments and many Reconstruction reforms safeguarding their rights. When the Republican Party deserted them in the 1870s and 1880s, blacks were faced with increasing federal indifference and southern disenfranchisement. In this atmosphere, the dream that Negro rights could be secured through conventional political behavior was displaced by the doctrine of advancement through moral and economic development, so eloquently espoused by leaders like Booker T. Washington. Once black Americans proved themselves worthy of freedom, through hard work and self-discipline, they were assured that they would be accorded the same rights and privileges as other Americans.

World War I, with its dramatic opportunities to demonstrate heroism and devotion, provided a perfect testing ground for this doctrine. "We believe that our second emancipation will be the outcome of this war," a black leader in Texas announced. In fact, of course, the war proved once again that no matter how devoutly blacks might play by the rules, the rules simply did not apply to them. Their optimism and loyalty were rewarded with segregation and humiliation in the armed forces. The French were cautioned that if they allowed their women to fraternize with black troops they could expect to see them raped. And black troops were warned that when they returned home they had better not expect to enjoy the kind of freedom they had experienced abroad. The warning was apt. Ten returned soldiers were among the more than seventy blacks lynched in 1919; a far larger number were among those assaulted in the year's twenty-five race riots. "The injustice of the whole thing overwhelmed me," a black veteran, mobbed by whites in Chicago, testified. "Had the ten months I spent in France been all in vain?"

The result of this disillusionment, which many other blacks throughout America were experiencing, was a heightened tendency to search within Afro-American culture and look to the black community itself for those things necessary to survival and advancement. Signs of this mood were everywhere: in the continued revival of traditional black religious practices and music, and their spread from the Holiness churches to the larger denominations; in the development of jazz, which kept so many traditional Afro-American musical forms alive; in the rise of the blues, an inward-looking music which focused upon the everyday problems of black men and women; in the Harlem Renaissance, whose writers searched for an African past and celebrated the culture of the black folk. Marcus Garvey arrived in the United States prepared to preach the message of cultural particularism and revitalization to a people ready, often eager, to hear it.

Garvey articulated more brilliantly than any other black leader of the period the doctrine of his people's revitalization. "We have a beautiful history," he thundered, "and we shall create another one in the future." He insisted that black people had the ability to regain "that ancient place, that ancient position that we once occupied, when Ethiopia was in her glory." He warned the white world: "We are coming 400,000 strong and we mean to retake every square inch of the 12,000,000 square miles of African territory belonging to us by right Divine." Garvey used the symbol of Africa to enunciate the yearnings and needs of his people. He was preaching not merely the redemption of Africa; he was preaching the redemption of the entire Negro people. But Africa was more than merely a symbol. Garvey fully expected to help build a black republic spanning the continent from Liberia to the Cape. He was convinced that so long as blacks lacked an autonomous nation of their own, they would never be accorded their rights anywhere in the world. The diplomatic pressure that a strong, independent Africa could exert, he argued, would protect American Negroes far more completely than any anti-lynching bill.

Garvey's failure to establish a U.N.I.A. settlement in southern Liberia remained one of his great frustrations. Though it is doubtful that he would have used such a settlement to urge a massive black return from the diaspora, his intentions are obscured by his own ambivalence and rhetorical inconsistencies on this issue. Nevertheless, it seems clear that among his American followers, the *idea* of an African homeland was always more potent than any actual desire to abandon the United States. "My mother was an intense Garveyite," the child of one of his supporters remembered. "The back-to-Africa part was not important. Pride was. Negroes should have something of their own."

THIS ABILITY to understand the needs and desires of his fellow blacks was the primary reason for Garvey's rapid accession to a position of power and influence. When Garvey assured his followers that man "is master of his own destiny, and architect of his own fate," and when he enjoined them to "take yourselves out of the mire and hitch your hopes to the stars; yes, rise as high as the very stars themselves," he was preaching a traditional doctrine deeply rooted in nineteenth-century American ideology and carefully inculcated in the freedmen during the years of Reconstruction and after. When Garvey shouted his slogan, "Up, you mighty race!" he was enunciating a credo which, however radical a racial doctrine, was appealingly familiar. Garvey transformed Booker T. Washington's

The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers, Volume I: 1826-1919, Volume II: 1919-1920, Volume III: September 1920-August 1921, edited by Robert A. Hill (University of California Press, 579 pp., 710 pp., 750 pp., $32.50 each)

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philosophy of individual mobility into a mechanism designed to increase the worldwide consciousness, unity, and power of the race.

Garvey was similarly adept at understanding the importance of religion in black culture, and incorporating many of its elements in his movement. He regularly employed a religious vocabulary and frequently cast himself in the role of Jesus. "Christ died to make men free," he wrote in 1923, "I shall die to give courage and inspiration to my race." Garvey taught his followers that the God they worshiped had created them the equals of all other human beings. He insisted that although God had no color, the only way to stop whites from continuing to monopolize the image of God was for blacks "to see God through our own spectacles . . . we shall worship Him through the spectacles of Ethiopia."

Accordingly, the U.N.I.A. canonized Jesus as a "Black Man of Sorrows," and the Virgin Mary as a "Black Madonna." Most importantly, Garvey incorporated into his Liberty Hall meetings an elaborate religious liturgy and zeal. Hymns were sung, prayers recited, offerings received, just as in church. It is not surprising, then, that the U.N.I.A. attracted some 250 black ministers as members, nor is it surprising to find Garvey's followers describing their experiences in religious terms. "I stood there like one in a trance, every sentence ringing in my ears, and finding an echo in my heart," William Sherril wrote of his reaction to first hearing Garvey speak. "When I walked out . . . I was a different man—I knew my sacred obligations to my creator, and my responsibilities to my fellow men."

Garvey's penchant for pomp and ceremony, for wearing gaudy uniforms and robes, for bestowing such titles as "Knight Commander of the Nile" upon his lieutenants, for creating such groups as the blue-clad African Legion, the Black Cross Nurses, marching bands, choristers, and other uniformed, military-style auxiliaries, brought him enormous ridicule as a "clown" and a "charlatan" who "led big parades of ignorant people down the street selling pie in the sky." In fact Garvey was utilizing the trappings of still one more popular and traditional institution—the fraternal organization—for his own purposes. He understood the functions of such familiar organizations far better than his critics. "I remember as a lad in Cleveland, Ohio, during the hungry days of 1921, standing on Central Avenue, watching a parade one Sunday afternoon when thousands of Garvey Legionnaires, resplendent in their uniforms marched by," one of his followers recalled. "When Garvey rode by in his plumed hat, I got an emotional lift, which swept me up above the poverty and prejudice by which my life was limited."

IT WAS in the areas where Garvey failed to understand the cultural predilections, or to anticipate the needs of those he wanted to lead, that he stumbled badly. Garvey wanted to unite his people not only politically and economically, but racially. He championed the notion of "a pure black race," denounced "the curse of many colors" produced by slavery, announced that it was time to stop this "wholesale bastardy" and create "a race type and standard of our own." In 1922 he met with leaders of the Ku Klux Klan to explain that the U.N.I.A. supported the Klan's opposition to miscegenation and to social equality. No other act brought Garvey more criticism or cost him more support; still, on this issue he never apologized and he never changed. He praised President Harding for speaking out "against every suggestion of social equality"; he thanked southern whites for having "lynched race pride into the Negro"; he forged an alliance with the Anglo-Saxon Clubs and openly praised a number of white racist leaders "for telling us what they are, and what they mean, thereby giving us a chance to stir for ourselves."

Garvey's racial ideology lent a conservative cast to his politics. His deep suspicion of the white working class made it difficult for him to cooperate with either labor unions or the political left, and led him to hail the businessman as the "only convenient friend" of the black workers, since the capitalist's desire to maximize profits was greater than his racial feelings and prompted him to employ the cheapest labor available.

Garvey's attempt to lead a mass movement inevitably created some tensions with black intellectuals, editors, and political activists. It was Garvey's racial ideology, however, that exacerbated these differences, and fostered the impossibly poor relations with other black leaders that ultimately led to

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his downfall. From almost the moment he arrived, Garvey denounced the "treachery and treason" of the light-skinned leaders of the Afro-American community whom he chracterized as "mere opportunists" living off the people. He dismissed Cyril Briggs, the leader of the militant African Blood Brotherhood, as a "white man"; he criticized the "near-white" leaders of the N.A.A.C.P., which he insisted upon calling the "National Association for the Advancement of Certain People"; he attacked the "venal, ignorant, and corrupt" Negro press, "controlled by crafty and unscrupulous persons who have no love of race"; he branded W. E. B. Du Bois a "lazy dependent mulatto," whose mixed Dutch, French, and African ancestry made him "a monstrosity" who "bewails every day the drop of Negro blood in his veins"; and he accused Du Bois and his allies of planning the extinction of the black race through miscegenation.

GARVEY'S incessant feud with the black establishment not only rendered impossible the unified black community he claimed he wanted, it helped to undermine his leadership and destroy the effectiveness of his organization. A number of prominent black editors, N.A.A.C.P. officials, and business people alerted federal officials to alleged illegalities in Garvey's operation of the Black Star Line and insisted, when the government dragged its feet, that the Attorney General "disband and extirpate" Garvey's "vicious movement." Though there was no evidence that he was guilty of anything more than poor management, inexperience, and bad judgment in choosing some of his associates, Garvey was found guilty of fraudulent use of the mails to sell Black Star stocks and sentenced to five years in prison. In the fall of 1927, after he had served more than half of his sentence, Garvey was released from Atlanta Penitentiary and deported as an undesirable alien.

Garvey was to spend the remaining twelve years of his life in unhappy exile in Jamaica and London, far removed from the most powerful constituency he had. He continued the patterns of the past, editing newspapers and magazines, delivering speeches, hosting conventions of the U.N.I.A., feuding with his former colleagues in America, and trying to raise money for his moribund movement. In 1939 lack of funds forced him to suspend publication of this last magazine, *Black Man*, and he spent the final year of his life in silent penury in London where he died on June 10, 1940, nine weeks short of his fifty-third birthday.

Though he died in isolation, Garvey was not to be forgotten. To this day his name is still invoked, his ideas still discussed, his influence still felt. Garvey would not have been surprised: "The end is not in our day but in our time we can make a certain contribution toward it," he assured his followers, "so that when the final history of man is to be written, there will not only be glory for others but there will be glory for us."

IRONICALLY Garvey was more successful with history than he has been with historians. That the first scholarly biography of Garvey—Edmund Cronon's brief and, by now, dated *Black Moses* (1955)—remains in many ways the most useful and comprehensive, is a testament to the bleak state of Garvey studies. Subsequent histories, with such notable exceptions as Randall K. Burkett's important *Garveyism as a Religious Movement* (1978), all too easily became mired in exactly the kind of partisanship Garvey inspired during his lifetime. They have been so eager to assign praise or blame that they have had little time to seek understanding.

Those determined to forge their own understanding from the sources faced grave difficulties. Garvey left no collection of personal papers; the U.N.I.A.'s records were at best scattered and sparse; even Garvey's newspapers and magazines were difficult to locate in complete runs. The most valuable available work has been a contemporary collection of Garvey's speeches, editorials, and articles, *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, edited by his wife Amy Jacques Garvey—in close collaboration with Garvey himself—in two volumes in 1923 and 1925, and issued more widely as a one-volume paperback in the 1960s. As important as these volumes are, it is always unwise to rely too exclusively upon a collection edited by the subject, especially in the light of recent indications that the Garveys altered a number of Garvey's early speeches and articles to conform with his later views.

Happily it will be less and less necessary to do so, thanks to Robert A. Hill, a historian at the University of California, Los Angeles. In 1976 Professor Hill be-

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gan creating the first major corpus of materials that could meaningfully be called the Garvey Papers. In the intervening years he has assembled in Los Angeles some 25,000 documents which he tracked down in over 150 archives and manuscript collections in North and Central America, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and Europe. It was a monumental task and Hill has accomplished it with admirable energy, dedication, and intelligence, as the publication of the first three of the projected ten-volume *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers* attests. These invaluable volumes whet our appetite for more and they place Robert Hill and his associates in that small circle of scholars such as Louis R. Harlan of the Booker T. Washington Papers, John Blassingame of the Frederick Douglass Papers, and Ira Berlin, editor of *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867*, the first volume of which has recently appeared, who are all making accessible the materials of a neglected and misunderstood past.

IT IS A MARK of how little is still known of Garvey's formative period that the 579-page first volume brings the story all the way up to August 1919, while the 710 pages of volume two are devoted to the events of the following year, culminating in the U.N.I.A.'s First International Convention of Negro Peoples of the World which was held throughout the month of August 1920. The third volume, just published, follows Garvey through the U.N.I.A. convention of the next August. The paucity of information relating to Garvey's Jamaica years, like a number of the other disappointments these volumes hold, relates not to editorial decisions, but to the dearth of sources on the one hand and the nature of the personality the editors had to work with on the other. We learn little about Garvey's personal life—the shape of his private relationships, his courtship and first marriage, his friendships, his leisure activities—because, I suspect, Garvey sacrificed his private life to his organizing, writing, and oratory. If only the public Garvey emerges from these pages, that may be the only Garvey there was.

There is only one major area in which I feel impelled to urge change. The first two volumes, like most previous studies of Garvey, relate the history of a mass movement with the masses left out. While Hill and his associates do a better job than prior scholars—many of the reports of U.N.I.A. meetings they reprint include the reactions of the audience—there is room for improvement. After all, these are the papers not only of Garvey but of the U.N.I.A. as well, and there can be no greater priority than attempting to document the attitudes and actions of the grass-roots membership. We are left with too scanty a sense of who the members were, why they joined, what they did at the weekly meetings, in what ways they used the Liberty Halls during the rest of the week, how they were recruited, what effects their U.N.I.A. experience had upon them, to what extent the movement changed their thought and to what extent it gave voice to attitudes long held and deeply internalized.

These are not easy questions to answer. But if a project this extensive does not pursue them, who will? Have all of the letters from the membership to Garvey been lost? Did the *Negro World* and other U.N.I.A. publications carry no correspondence columns? Almost all of the photographs illustrating these volumes are of leaders. Was a single photograph of a crowd watching a U.N.I.A. parade in Harlem all the editors could find, and are there no photographs of members at U.N.I.A. meetings? Are there no records giving us some more definite sense of the composition and distribution of the membership so that we can test once and for all the frequent charge that Garvey appealed primarily to West Indian migrants? If the editors have exhausted all possibilities and if there really is no way to further document the role and attitudes of the masses within the movement, they ought to explain the situation in detail so that future researchers will know what is and what is not possible. But if, as I suspect, more can be done, they ought to spare no effort; the result will be an even more valuable set of documents.

LET THERE BE no mistake, however; this is already an exceedingly important contribution, published in a handsome format by the University of California Press, which will make it possible to feel the force of Garvey's great oratorical and journalistic skills, and to trace the unfolding of his ideology from its first appearance as a Jamaica-based version of Booker T. Washington's doctrine of self-help to the more militant and complex blend of ideas that took shape in the United States. In the early pages of the first volume we find Garvey warning the black man that he was where he was

> because he kept himself backward; but if he were to try to raise himself to a higher state in the civilized cosmos, all the other races would be glad to meet him on the place of equality and comradeship. It is indeed unfair to demand equality when one of himself has done nothing to establish the right to equality.

By the end of World War I Garvey was singing a different tune:

> The white man of the world has been accustomed to deal with the Uncle Tom cringing Negro. Up to 1918, he knew no other Negro than the Negro represented through Booker Washington. Today he will find that a new Negro is on the stage.

During the 1919 race riots Garvey warned that

> Mobs of white men all over the world will continue to lynch and burn Negroes so long as we remain divided among ourselves. The very moment all the Negroes of this and other countries start to stand together, that very time will see the white man standing in fear of the Negro race even as he stands in fear of the yellow race of Japan today.

His reference to the progress Japan had made was typical. The documents in these volumes make it clear that Garvey identified strongly with, and took great hope from, the other liberation movements of his day. In the summer of 1920 he sent greetings to Eamon De Valera, the Irish republican leader, and assured him, "We believe Ireland should be free even as Africa shall be free for the Negroes of the world. Keep up the fight for a free Ireland." A few months earlier he told thousands of his followers,

> We are a new people, . . . born out of the bloody war of 1914-1918. A new spirit, a new courage, has come to us simultaneously as it came to the other peoples of the world. It came to us at the same time it came to the Jew. When the Jew said, "We shall have Palestine!" the same sentiment came to us when we said, "We shall have Africa!"

A substantial amount of information about Garvey and his movement can be gleaned from the reports of the Department of Justice and of British Military Intelligence, both of which employed secret agents to watch the U.N.I.A. The many reports included here range from the ludicrous observation of Captain

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John B. Cambell in October 1919 that "a Negro agitator from New York City, named John Garvey, has been in Chicago for the last four days delivering inflammatory speeches . . . also selling stock for a Black Belt Steamship Company," to detailed informative reports that not only summarized the speeches of Garvey and his lieutenants but also described the composition and reactions of the audience;

"I noticed that the headquarters of the Universal Negro Improvement Association received many visitors today after last night's enthusiastic meeting. . . ." reads one report.

> I spoke to several of the callers and asked them whether or not [the Black Star Line] is a good investment. . . . They all took great pains to show me that it was the only investment that meant anything at all to a member of the Negro Race. They are firmly convinced that they are going to cause the "acquiring of possession of Africa" and have the most implicit faith in the immediate establishment of a Negro Republic in Liberia. (New York, February 19, 1920.)

THOUGH WHEN used with discrimination and care these intelligence reports can be of obvious value in helping us understand the Garvey movement, the agents who wrote them seem never to have understood the causes and the nature of the phenomenon they were scrutinizing. They were prone to dismiss Garvey as an "agitator" planting the seeds of anger and disloyalty in his followers, the bulk of whom were characterized as "foreigners." Garvey, who in fact was doing as much sowing as planting, never seems to have been convinced that the bulk of his following were West Indian sojourners in the United States. On the contrary, he was careful to anchor his movement not only in the contemporary developments that saw colonial peoples manifesting their desire for political and cultural autonomy, but also in the history of the United States itself. He quoted freely from Patrick Henry and other Revolutionary leaders, he invoked the principles of the Founding Fathers, he reviewed the history of the Puritan settlers. Dissatisfied with their treatment in England, the "Pilgrim Fathers," he taught, came to "a great forest country, a country of wilderness," inhabited by "uncivilized and untutored men," and there they built hamlets and villages which became towns and cities. There they created a vision of freedom which led them to build "a great nation—one great country, one republic." In the unlikely event his audience missed the analogy, he led them in a litany:

> Can we not imitate the Pilgrim Fathers of America? Were the Pilgrim Fathers Divine? (Cries of no, no!) Were the Pilgrim Fathers super-human? (Cries of no, no!) No, the Pilgrim Fathers were human—men and women like us to-night. But they had a purpose; they had a vision—it was the purpose of freedom, it was the vision of liberty.

His conclusion summed up the genius of his techniques as well as the complexity of his appeal. How many in his audience, he asked, believed the white man was capable of doing more than they were. When they cried out "Nobody!" he issued his challenge:

> The white man has taken the forest country and made a great nation of it. If you believe in your firmest convictions from the depths of your soul that you are as good as the white man, your chance has come now. Go out and make barren Africa a great nation, as great a country as America is through the sacrifice of the blood of the Pilgrim Fathers and the early settlers who came here. Now is your chance.

Now is our chance, through these important volumes, to finally begin to come to terms with the significance of Garvey's complex, fascinating career and the meaning of the movement he built.

SHLOCK OF RECOGNITION

God Knows
by Joseph Heller

(Knopf, 353 pp., $16.95)

The Bible is not a funny book. Its author is not a funny God. At no point between the opening verse of Genesis and the closing verse of Chronicles is He observed to laugh. (Nahmanides noticed this in thirteenth-century Spain, and Baudelaire in nineteenth-century Paris.) The Jews, however, are a funny people; their history has left them, quite understandably, with a hunger for humor. It has left them fuming, too, about the costs of their "chosenness." The ancient and medieval traditions are punctuated by outbursts of anger, by complaints put bitterly by man to God, by tantrums before the tremendum. Not until the license of the modern period, however, were the inhibitions upon Jewish ire completely shed; at last the magnitude of the Jewish protest against the apartness that Jews made for themselves, and the adversity that others made for them, was fully ventilated. And a primary vehicle of Jewish anger was Jewish humor, from Heinrich Heine to Lenny Bruce.

America, as is well known, was where Jewish humor fantastically flourished. It has become perhaps the most well-known product of American Jewish culture. But something happened to Jewish humor in America. It shrank in its scope. Its metaphysical commentary, its interest in the collective fate, the dimension of desperation that had made it an essential instrument of the healing heart, all disappeared. As the jokes have gone from Yiddish to English, they have gone from God to parents. There is less history and more psychology, less religion and more sociology. The reason for the change is not simply secularism, which elsewhere in the Jewish exile retained the grandeur of the tradition in its opposition to it. It is rather the sweetness of the American exile. No country has ever been kinder to the Jews than this one; indeed, the legitimacy of Jewish life in America is so unassailable that it has quite properly become Israel's only competition for the future of Jewish history. Here Jewish comedy cannot draw on Jewish tragedy. And so it has lost its philosophical edge. (There have been exceptions, to be sure, such as some of the early stories of Philip Roth.)

The primary purpose of a great deal of contemporary American Jewish humor is rather to lessen the tradition's threat, to diminish the stature of spiritual standards to which it has fallen heir but which it cannot be bothered to honor, to embarrass the past by which

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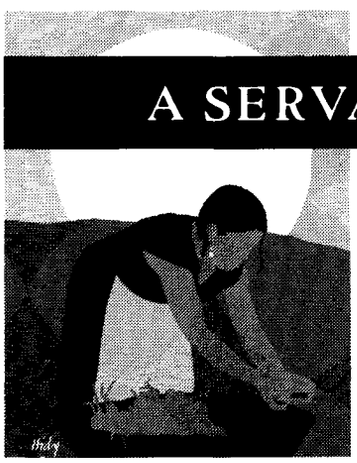
it is embarrassed. Such absolution may be accomplished, for example, by making the strange into the familiar, the great into the plain. Of this method Woody Allen is the master; his success at conflating the icons of Jewishness (and the icons of modern culture) with his own infirmities has made him one of the most powerful forces working against seriousness today. Allen has been rewarded by his audiences for his many reassurances. He brings comfort to the consumers of culture. Fear not the rabbis! say his stupid appearances in a caftan and a beard. Fear not the artists! say his nervous invocations of one genius after another. The extraordinary, you see, was really the ordinary.

And the high was really the low. Another effective way of puncturing the prestige of serious things is by rendering them as sex. Portnoy, of course, is the supreme example of such coarsening; but the list of American-Jewish writers and humorists who lodge the libido in the middle of the meaning of life is very long. What a weapon Freud placed in the hands of the incompletely secular, of Jews with memories. Suddenly it is swift transit from the subject of God's justice to the subject of getting laid. I use the tawdry two words advisedly, for there is nothing of any erotic interest at all in the deeds or the desires of our famous American-Jewish boys. Surely sex may be a highway of the human soul; but not the sex that Philip Roth and Woody Allen and Mordecai Richler and Bruce Jay Friedman and Herbert Gold and Allan Lelchuk and David Steinberg (and John Updike the honorary Jew and Joan Rivers the honorary man) seek. What profundity of experience can be won, after all, from confusing a woman with a piece of pork? It is all just banal blasphemy, a hollow and hurtful revenge upon the imprisonments of interior life.

The strange as the familiar, the extraordinary as the ordinary, the high as the low, the pure as the impure—it amounts to a genre, preposterously prominent in American-Jewish culture, that may be called the shlock of recognition. Its thesis, briefly, is that there are no more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in Brooklyn. The aim, again, is to comfort the present for the magnitude of its difference with the past. And, of course, to entertain. Sometimes it succeeds. Is there anything funnier than the Roman republic or the *ancien régime* or the wild West of Mel Brooks? The procurators and the helots, the courtiers and the Jacobins, the cowboys and the Indians, all talk like retired garment workers in the walk-ups on Ocean Parkway. Joseph Heller's new novel will inevitably be compared, its joylessness notwithstanding, to Mel Brooks. It does not deserve the compliment.

THIS TIME it is David, King of Israel, who has been resettled on Ocean Parkway. (He is even given an enlarged prostate.) *God Knows* is the great and holy man's memoirs. There is a kind of cultural perfection to the book, since it has successfully fused the narcissistic autobiography of the American Jewish writer with the crazy anachronisms of the American Jewish comedian. Naturally the purpose is to paint the great and holy man as neither great nor holy. The novel is written with enormous energy. In his way Heller has read and reflected on Samuel I and II, the books of the Bible richest in sacred and profane intrigues. His unerring ear for the English diction of the second generation of American Jews in the middle of the twentieth century is abundantly evident; it was in *Good as Gold* too, and here it is mixed rather skillfully with the lyricism of the Bible's language. But that is all. *God Knows* is an invincibly vulgar book. It is in fact a masterpiece of the shlock of recognition.

David's memoir takes the form of a long (a very long) monologue. He begins at the end of his life—I Kings 1, to be precise. He is old and he is cold. The most beautiful girl in the kingdom is brought to lie with him, to warm him as he frets about the succession to his throne. Bathsheba is pushing her son Solomon, rather in the manner of a show business mother. And so David begins lovelessly to review the events of his life, from his anointment by Samuel as a shepherd boy in Bethlehem to the final ugliness of the politics of his palace. Goliath, Saul (and again Saul, the monster of melancholy, perhaps the most heartbreaking figure in the Bible), Jonathan, Michal, Bathsheba, Nathan, Absalom, Solomon——all are remembered, and primarily as the sources of what is known in Brooklyn as aggravation. The crankiness has no end. Michal was too much a "JAP," Bathsheba was too much a "WASP," and so on. The greatest aggravation of all is God. For example:



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> Some Promised Land. The honey was there, but the milk we brought in with our goats. To people in California, God gives a magnificent coastline, a movie industry, and Beverly Hills. To us He gives sand. To Cannes He gives a plush film festival. We get the P.L.O. Our winters are rainy, our summers hot. To people who don't know how to wind a wristwatch He gives underground oceans of oil. To us He gives hernia, piles, and anti-Semitism.

That is perfectly representative of what Joseph Heller thinks is wit. Pure borscht belt then, all 353 pages of it: the psalmist as Jackie Mason. Except that the material is lousy.

Lousiest of all is the sex, which is the book's controlling obsession. Its infantilism is infinite. Item: "Like cunnilingus, tending sheep is dark and lonely work." Item: "Girl-crazy Samson was a pushover for Philistine twat." Item: "In the end I will prove partial to my painted darling, Bathsheba, for reasons having nothing whatsoever to do with God, custom, or country. She gave me head." Item (the last, I promise; but this major new novel deserves not to be misrepresented):

> I almost didn't lie with Bathsheba at all that first day on the roof. . . . But just in time up spoke the devil to rally my faltering spirit. . . . : "Go get her," I heard a voice edged with mirth and irony instruct.
>
> "Take her, you dope. Go on. Fuck her belly off. You want her, don't you? What are you waiting for, stupid? You're a king, ain't you?"
>
> "Is that you, God?" I asked diffidently.
>
> "Mephistopheles."
>
> "Oh, shit," I said, groaning with disappointment. "Are you after my soul?"
>
> "Do I need souls?" was the mocking answer. "I want mischief, not souls. I want laughs, fun. I want to watch. Bring her here. Hurry. Before she finishes drying and goes inside. Just look at those tits. Ooh, oooh, oooh!"

(Connoisseurs of crudity will agree that the makers of *Animal House* can sue over that passage.)

Enough. *God Knows* is junk. It is also a best-seller. Thus historians will have employment. They will have the difficult task of explaining how it was that the arrested adolescence of a few Jewish men became the cherished currency of an entire chapter in American culture. God, and David, and the psalms, and all the strange and sublime things that Joseph Heller has traduced and trivialized for reasons that are best discovered fifty minutes at a time a few times a week, have anyway survived worse.

LEON WIESELTIER

THE LEFT LANGUISHES

The New Politics of Inequality by Thomas Byrne Edsall

(Norton, 288 pp., $15.95)

Why did Ronald Reagan appear when he did? What accounts for the unlikely ascendancy of militant conservatism as a minority ideology with majority appeal? The right is fortunate, of course, to have as its leader the most upbeat salesman since Roosevelt. Reagan is said to be a fluke, a shaman, a reassuring front man for an ideological extremism that affronts most Americans when it is served up by ordinary mortals. Still, as effective as Reagan is, he is far from the only source of liberal collapse.

The back-of-the-envelope calculation of liberal eclipse has become numbingly familiar. Economic growth expired on the liberal watch; stagflation discredited Keynesianism. The New Deal as a coalition of the dispossessed succumbed to affluence; it ossified into a Washington committee of special interests. The most vocal voters feeling deprivation are no longer proles, but aspiring young professionals who identify more with Lee Iacocca than with Walter Reuther. Demographics shifted the political center to the conservative Sunbelt. Post-Watergate reform backfired; the idea was to restore civility and integrity to the political marketplace, but instead of *pax* we got PACs. Vietnam took its toll. The left squabbled; liberals got tired. In the oscillations of the intellectual business cycle, it was simply the

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right's turn. And finally, the Democrats had the bad luck to draw a string of leaders who were either strong but divisive (Johnson, Humphrey, McGovern) or conciliatory and wimpy (Carter, Mondale).

All of these insights are true—and they are all superficial. For, as Thomas Byrne Edsall explains in his superb book, something far deeper is at work—a "major shift in the balance of power in the United States," reflecting a relative erosion in the political influence "of the bottom half of the economic spectrum," and a significant increase in the political cohesion and effectiveness of the wealthy. The result is something quite new to the United States—an unmistakable politics of ideology and class, a phenomenon all the more remarkable (and elusive) for having entered from stage right.

For those liberals who reassured themselves that the "end of ideology" was only temporary, who waited faithfully for class politics to return, Reaganism isn't quite what was anticipated. It's not the workers who have acquired class consciousness. It's the bosses. "Don't Mourn, Organize!" could be the slogan of the American Council for Capital Formation. And despite the joint claim of Mondale and Reagan that 1984 affords the clearest choice of philosophies in fifty years, what we have today is not a symmetrical politics of two contending ideologies, European style. Instead American politics offers a cohesive right, a demoralized and managerial center, and no left.

Edsall's story is a study in contrasts: the ideological clarity of the Republican Party compared to the incoherent themes and class base of the Democrats; the ascendance and sophistication of business versus the defensiveness and isolation of labor; the growth of astonishingly well-financed conservative think tanks weighed against the vacuum of fresh ideas that express egalitarian values; and most importantly, the effective mobilization of the class interests of the wealthy, contrasted with the low voting participation of the poor. For example, between 1964 and 1980 the gap between white-collar and blue-collar voting turnout increased from 25 percent to 48 percent; in 1980, 70.9 percent of white-collar workers voted, but only 48 percent of blue-collar workers did. The poor are still with us. They just don't vote (and with good reason).

The result, Edsall writes, is a devastating tilt. The visible part of the political spectrum—the part to which elected officials must respond—is far more conservative than the polity as a whole. The right has figured out how to convert money and latent business influence into substantial power; the left, defined as the self-interest of the nonrich, has less money though more ground troops, which ought to count for something in a nation that elects its leaders. But the left hasn't figured out how to mobilize its resources. The shift in politics away from the mobilization of people and toward fund-raising and campaign technology, Edsall observes, plays to the natural strength of conservatives and Republicans.

The growing influence within the Congressional Democratic Party of "social" and procedural suburban liberals, along with the relative decline in the effective influence of people of below-average income, Edsall argues, "left the Democratic Party highly vulnerable to pressures from the business community that had been quietly but effectively mobilizing since 1973." Edsall's discussion of the multifarious influence of PAC money is particularly astute. As Watergate unfolded, Deep Throat advised the *Post*'s Bob Woodward to "follow the money"; and a generation of Common Cause-style reformers and investigative reporters have done just that. But, says Edsall, much of the criticism has missed the point. Reformers tend to rail against PACs and "special interests" in general as if the problem were ideologically symmetrical. But the reality is more complex than Republican Congressmen in hock to business PACs and Democrats in thrall to labor. Rather, the growth of PACs has served not merely to corrupt politics but to push the political center to the right.

FIRST, AS Edsall points out, business lobbies have become far far richer, more effective, and better organized than labor. In 1972 labor PACs spent $8.5 million; corporate and trade association PACs together spent $8 million. By 1982 the whole game had inflated, but business was outspending labor better than 2 to 1. Business influence on Congress has become pervasive, while labor's is restricted to the dwindling regions with still-powerful unions.

Even more important as a conservative force is the different pattern of party and PAC donations to Republicans and to Democrats. On the Republican side, as Edsall documents, conservative money flows to ideologically pro-business challengers and contestants for open seats. On the Democratic side, however, business PACs invest in incumbents. In contests for open seats, Edsall calculates, 84 percent of PAC money went to Republicans; but when it came time to donate to incumbents, business PACs gave almost equally to both parties. Over a decade, as campaigns in general have become more

Boat Near The Capo Miseno

Spur-scattered and burrowing a surge of sand:
  blue and orange down the ride of her,
tilted to hear the smashed breathing of aeons,
  so too the dazed may still live,

a painted fan spun to the dancing floor
  among the blind heels clatter-ribbed
and melting bolts oozing oxide of blood:
  so rummaging love tapers them,

  oh how the adze caressed you,
lightest curve still healing to the hand
  and the mathematical plunge
outward into the Punic element,

  caressed and raftered each city,
and in the Greek horse also it framed up
breathing beams, men itched and sweated inside her,
  outside they chanted hymns,

and now the tarred joinery of the mortises
  lies unburdened,
in the gape and the roll of your undoing
  resin remembers the iron.

John Peck

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and more costly, this has had the effect of making a whole generation of Congressional Democrats far more solicitous of business.

Beyond simply spending more on the overt purchase of influence, business also has been far more effective than labor at coordinating campaign contributions, grass-roots lobbying, and ideological merchandising. The modern orchestration of grass-roots lobbying may have been invented by the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and Ralph Nader, but it has been perfected by business. Edsall writes,

> Just as grass-roots lobbying had proved to be uniquely compatible with the pyramid structure of corporations, corporations proved to be almost perfectly suited to the creation and ongoing maintanance of political action committees. Once a chief executive officer and a board of directors approve creation of a PAC, contributions to the corporate PAC by management-level personnel become an integral part of company policy.

SEEN AGAINST this gross shift in the balance of political resources, it is no surprise that the Democratic Party is loaded with leaders like Congressman Dan Rostenkowski, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, a safe incumbent who is a top PAC recipient; or that Democrats vote for abominations like the 1981 tax act; or that Congressional leaders have come to see laissez faire as a national mood rather than the orchestrated campaign that it is. This, says Edsall, is the real explanation for the "ideological ambiguity" (lovely phrase) of the Democratic Party. It also reinforces the reluctance of Democrats to effectively champion the economic interests of the nonrich. It creates the illusion that the well-documented support of most Americans for equity, for progressive taxation, and for redistributive social programs like public schools, public health, social retirement, and full employment, is an opinion-poll anomaly rather than a genuine preference, which has been suppressed by the disproportionate political influence of wealth.

Edsall also observes that the Watergate Class of 1974 produced a generation of procedural reformers whose own sense of class and equity issues was highly ambiguous, and did nothing to restore the Democrats' dwindling class and constituency base. Thus not only the PAC movement, but *the anti-PAC movement* as well, has diminished the political influence of the nonwealthy. In that respect, the Common Cause/neoliberal/procedural reform movement of the 1970s repeats an old theme in which progressivism short circuits populism. As in the progressive era, a potential alliance of elite reformers and needy people never quite came off. The civic leaguers of that era never really understood why the laboring classes preferred lunch-bucket corruption to clean politics and empty plates. It is the same disdain that the neolibs have for the public sector and the A.F.L.-C.I.O.

AS Edsall recounts, the reformist impulse of the 1970s, though it failed to rebuild an ideologically cogent egalitarian party, was quite sufficient to rouse the dormant class solidarity of business. His concluding chapter, on the distributional tilt of recent tax and spending policies, presents those policy changes as the natural consequence of a power shift, not as "new ideas" or as the reflection of changing popular sentiment.

This is the best book on class, ideology, money, and politics in many a political year—in a political and journalistic culture that tends to deprecate the importance of class. Edsall, a writer for *The Washington Post*, is the rare blend of working political reporter, scholar, and unabashed liberal. He has a practical grasp of Capitol Hill politics, lobbying nuances, party foibles—as well as a keen intellectual curiosity that drives him to the library. Thus the book draws on telling anecdote and journalistic savvy, but also on the political science literature, on income distribution data, O.E.C.D. reports, tax analyses, and class voting participation studies. His prose is incisive, well organized and well mannered. Edsall lets slip just a touch of understated but unmistakable indignation that American politics has acquired a long-term structural bias away from equality.

If Edsall is right, the American political economy is stuck with a legacy likely to outlast Reagan.

> As long as the balance of political power remains so heavily weighted towards those with economic power, national economic policy will remain distorted, regardless of which party is in control of the federal government.

There is but one ray of hope in this dismally perceptive tale of class reunion, and it is not one that Edsall deems worthy of much attention. Business, as a class, may have its political act together, but the Republican Party is another matter.

Commentators as diverse as Kevin Phillips, Richard Reeves, and Sidney Blumenthal have all observed that the Republican Party is an unstable mass of centrifugal tendencies. It contains big business pragmatists, laissez faire fundamentalists, gold bugs, supply-siders, budget balancers, as well as some truly primitive social and religious bigots who are closer to Cotton Mather than to Norris Cotton. In Reeves's elegant metaphor, the G.O.P. is like so many subatomic particles in orbit, racing around a nucleus named Reagan. Pull out the nucleus and the atom flies apart. Thus, while the political coming-of-age of business may last for a long while, the Republican Party as the effective instrument of business domi-

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nation just might be short-lived.

I certainly hope so. But it is sad indeed to look for the salvation of American liberalism in the hyper-exhaustion of a feverishly animated right. How much more hopeful it would be to find some evidence of conviction or revival in the egalitarian, liberal left. There are few signs of such a revival. Still, if knowledge is the beginning of power, Edsall has done his bit for liberalism redux. Despairing liberal, read this book.

ROBERT KUTTNER

THE STATE OF THE UNION

The Good News Is the Bad News Is Wrong by Ben Wattenberg

(Simon & Schuster, 416 pp., $17.95)

The unemployment rate for American teenagers in 1982 was 23 percent. That is a horrendous rate and has given us cause to wonder about the ability of American society and the American economy to offer a decent future to its young people. The unemployment rate for teenage blacks was much higher, about 40 percent. That is doubly horrendous, and has given us cause to despair about the ability of American society and the American economy ever to integrate our young blacks into the mainstream of American life. What on earth are we going to do with these hordes of dispossessed youngsters? It is a question that the media will not let us forget.

But hold on. Before rushing to an excited conclusion, with policies to suit, let us do what one should always do when confronted with a statistic—take a second and third hard look at it. Often the results of such an operation can be as instructive as they are astonishing. This 23 percent, for example, is the proportion, not of all teenage Americans, but of those who are in the "labor force," a category that includes young people who are working, job seekers out of work, or who are seeking work. Thus, the 50 percent of teenagers who are in school are excluded from both statistics. Moreover, we count (no one seems to know why) full-time students who are looking for part-time work as an unemployed segment of the labor force. So we can, if we wish, fairly describe the condition of teenage workers as follows: out of every one hundred American teenagers in 1982, there were five who were not full-time students and who were looking for a full-time job. And of these five, three had either voluntarily quit their last job or were looking for their first job.

Dissecting the statistic for black teenage unemployment leads to a similar finding. The figure of 40 percent unemployed has no reference to the 65 percent of all black teenagers who are full-time students or who are, whether married or unmarried, at home taking care of their children. These are not in the "labor force." Only one-third of all black teenagers are in the "labor force." So we can, if we wish, fairly describe the condition of black teenage workers as follows: out of every one hundred, thirty-five are in the labor force, and eighteen of these thirty-five are working. Of the seventeen who are not working, seven are in school full-time but say they are looking for work, part-time work usually. That leaves ten out of the one hundred actually unemployed, in the ordinary sense of the term. And of these, probably three or four are looking for their first job.

Summing it up: once you set aside full-time students and students looking for part-time work, the rate of teenage unemployment for whites and blacks—unemployment as most of us understand that term—is not so wildly divergent from the unemployment rate for adults. It is higher than one would like, to be sure, but it is not skyscraper high. You might also wish to take account of the interesting fact that black teenage unemployment drops precipitously as these young people move out of their teens. The unemployment rate for young blacks aged 20-24 is about one-fourth lower than the teenage rate. With maturity comes responsibilities, and a more serious involvement with the job market.

I take this striking example of "demystification" from Ben Wattenberg's new book. Demystification is, I think, an especially appropriate term for Mr. Wattenberg's enterprise in this Orwellian year of 1984. It is a year in which academics hold solemn conferences at which they look for Big Brother under every bed, every television set, every computer. It is also a year in which the media are evermore alarmist about the ultimate destiny of the technological changes, social changes, and economic changes we are living through. In this, it must be said, both the media and the academy are continuing a century-and-a-half-old tradition of social research and social theorizing, which emerged with the rise of modern urban-industrial society and largely in reaction to it.

It was then that "how the other half lives" became a mystery to be explored. Previously everyone more or less assumed, and more or less correctly, that such knowledge would be acquired casually, in the course of one's daily life. There were fewer people and most of them had a fair range of contacts with one another. You didn't have to be a sociologist to have a good idea about how the servant class lived, for instance, since they were likely to be living in your house. And it goes without saying that those servants knew very well how their masters and mistresses lived. Moreover, urban neighborhoods tended to be more mixed than they are today, and without those clear-cut class demarcations so characteristic of a modern urban area.

THUS modern social research made its appearance, relying on social statistics never before available, telling us about our fellow citizens, our neighbors, even about ourselves as these selves became more numerous, more varied, less organically tied to other selves. But this was research that, from the very beginning, had an ideological cast—nostalgic for the past, utopian perhaps toward a distant future, yet dismayed at the present. Has there ever been a major sociological work that bore a cheerful countenance? Durkheim found modern society responsible for increasing anomie and its resulting suicides. The great German sociologists contrasted *Gemeinschaft* (traditional community) to modern *Gesellschaft* (society), to the disadvantage of the latter.

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Weber saw the modern world moving ineluctably to a rationalized, bureaucratic society, an "iron cage" for its affluent, hedonistic, spiritless inhabitants. Meanwhile, empirical research, from Mayhew's London, to the Lynds' Middletown, to Riesman's *Lonely Crowd*, to practically all American sociologists of today, has been industriously providing empirical substantiation for this set of mind.

Much of this, according to Ben Wattenberg, is an exercise in sophisticated mystification, one that is successful enough to persuade us that we "know" a great deal that isn't so—and that is, moreover, confuted by our daily experience, if only we could bring ourselves to trust it. Wattenberg himself is an undaunted, old-fashioned believer in progress, cast in the eighteenth-century mold. This point of view has always had its severe limitations, but it can be extremely useful today as a corrective to the "disinformation" that, wittingly or unwittingly, the social sciences and the media propagate.

WATTENBERG'S methodology is as simple and straightforward as can be. He takes the *Statistical Abstract of the United States* and other official sources and reads them, with the detachment of a visitor from Mars, closely and carefully. It is an academic version of Yogi Berra's methodology: "You can observe an awful lot by just watching." And Wattenberg does observe an awful lot that has always been there to see, but which it comes as a surprise to discover.

Did you know, for instance, that of black women who bear an illegitimate child, 74 percent marry by the time they are 24? I never knew it. Now that I do, I am not certain of all of its implications, but I would certainly like to see those implications further explored. Apparently, those black female-headed households, about which we hear so much, suffer more from divorce and abandonment than from a failure to achieve a state of wedlock in the first place. Why? How does it happen? Until we have explored these particular questions, we are not likely to have a sensible public policy for those unfortunate women and children.

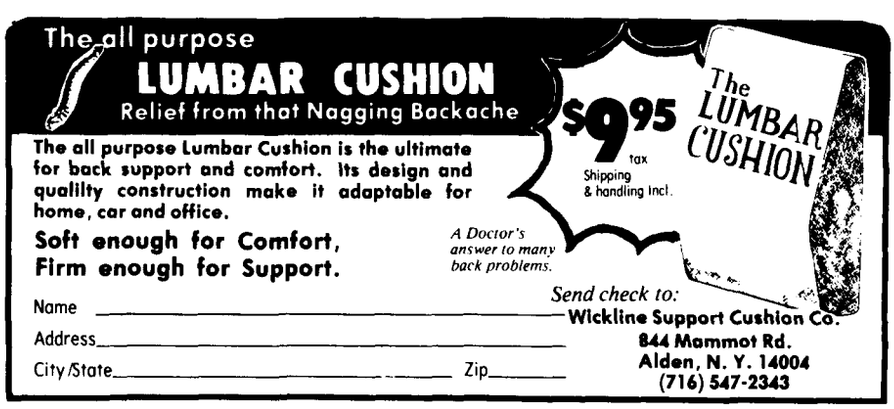
Wattenberg also comes up with the best justification of our current system of Social Security that I have ever seen. He puts it in the words of an interlocutor:

> We [older folks] don't like to take money from our kids. We don't want to be a burden. They don't like giving us money, either. We all get angry at each other if we do it that way. So we all sign a political contract to deal with what anthropologists would call "the inter-generational transfer of wealth." The young people *give* money to the government. I *get* money from the government. That way, we can both get mad at the government and keep on loving each other.

A thoroughly unromantic vision of intergenerational family relations, no doubt, but one that is probably more true than false. Indeed, we could use even a larger dose of un-romanticism when discussing this issue of Social Security. We are all inclined to see the Social Security system as a compassionate one-way transfer of wealth, from young to old. In fact, it is a transfer system that works in both directions. Many recipients of Social Security checks don't need the money, or don't need all of it. Their mortgages are paid off; they have private pensions and savings; they live modestly, as they always have. So they promptly turn around and make tax-free gifts to their children and grandchildren. Just how large this reverse flow is, the *Statistical Abstract* does not tell us, which is why Wattenberg cannot cope with it. But someone should investigate the matter. Aside from its economic implications, it would throw more light on intergenerational family relations, and would doubtless reveal them to be more closely-knit than Wattenberg himself seems to think.

This book is chock full of statistics that demystify many current and controversial issues. "De-industrialization," for example, has to do primarily with the shrinkage of high-paying unionized jobs in certain manufacturing industries, notably auto and steel. It does not even necessarily mean a shrinking in the industrial capacity of the industries involved, since these are in the process of becoming more efficient and productive. Manufacturing jobs in general are not shrinking in absolute terms; they are merely becoming a smaller proportion of total jobs, as the service industries proliferate. This gradual transformation of the American economy, which has been going on for many years, is as inevitable as it is natural to an affluent society. It creates problems, of course, as economic change always does. But we have coped successfully with such problems throughout all of American history. (Remember "de-agrarianization"?) One can understand the union leaders being upset by a shrinking membership, and one can also understand government doing what it can to ease the pains of transition of the workers involved. Still, "de-industrialization" is simply not a central economic or social issue for American society or the American economy as a whole.

Or take the "decline of the traditional family," an issue that is very popular among radical social scientists (especially the radical feminist variety), as well as among many publicists of the New Right. As Wattenberg calmly points out, it is only too easy to confuse changes in social arrangements that may turn out to be trivial, if temporarily irksome, with those that may be significant. The fact that only 35 percent of American households today are "traditional," in the sense of including husband, wife, and offspring, is less interesting than it seems. People do live much longer these days, so parents will constitute independent households long after their children have gone. Young people now earn enough money so that they don't have to live at home, as they used to. Young couples are marrying later, and are having children later, than they used to. All in all, the decline in the traditional family has been much exaggerated by traditional statistics superficially viewed.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Wattenberg is especially good at sighting in the statistics some of the more perverse consequences of what otherwise seems like a sensible public policy. Thus, in pursuit of "energy independence" (or less dependence, in truth) Congress has enacted legislation enforcing the manufacture of a larger proportion of smaller, fuel-efficient cars. It forgot, however, as did the enthusiastic proponents of this program, that smaller, lighter cars are much less safe than larger, heavier cars. If you are in a crash, you are two to eight times more likely to be killed—it depends on the type of accident—if you are in a small car as against a large one. So in the years ahead, thousands (perhaps tens of thousands) of Americans will die for the sake of fuel efficiency. Is it worth it? Congress closes it ears to that question.

The Good News Is the Bad News Is Wrong is a gold mine of such insights. It ought to be read by all those with pretensions of competence as they talk about American society, the American economy, and the American way of life. Wattenberg's "progressive" optimism is in short supply these days; it acts as a kind of tonic.

At least for a while, that is. Reflecting on the book, what one misses is some sensitivity to the large themes that constitute a viable "public philosophy." Is the American democracy really in as fine shape as he suggests? Do all the good parts add up to a healthy whole? What if Rome had had its *Statistical Abstract* for 100 A.D., or Russia for the year 1911? One welcomes Wattenberg's good cheer about America as a necessary antidote to the prevalent nay-saying. But one wonders if the true condition of a nation—particularly the moral and spiritual condition that shapes its destiny—can be inferred from statistical abstracts.

Still, if Wattenberg isn't Tocqueville, he is Wattenberg. And we should be grateful that we do have a Wattenberg today, to deliver us from bondage to half-truths and non-truths.

IRVING KRISTOL

Irving Kristol is editor of the *Public Interest*.

A new look at Van Gogh's greatest years.

THE ANNUNCIATION AT ARLES

BY EUGENE VICTOR THAW

THE NEUROTIC visionary madman whose paintings, even after the acceptance of impressionism, seemed so unskillful and bizarre that not one was sold in his lifetime, has now become the most accessible and beloved of early modernists. Van Gogh's images are by now deeply engraved in the popular mind. His severed ear and tragic suicide have provoked a cultural guilt complex which still pervades our attitudes toward experimental artists; we are so afraid of missing another Van Gogh that we tolerate, we celebrate, we collect much that proves to be worthless.

Van Gogh is thought of somewhat differently, however, by anyone with a specialized knowledge of modern art history. He is one of the pioneers of the art and the thought of the century that followed him—an intelligent theorist who paved the way to fauvism, whose symbolic shorthand verges toward pure abstraction, whose discoveries about the emotional content of color created modern Expressionism. His life is the paradigm of alienation—he was the perpetual "outsider." Only a short time after his death in 1890, Van Gogh's originality and brilliance were acknowledged by the sophisticated art world of Europe from Paris to Moscow.

But it was not until the late 1920s in Germany and the early '30s in America that he became a hero to the masses. The mood of the Depression and the new availability of color reproductions encouraged the process. When I was a child my parents received as a bonus from the *New York Post* an album of Van Gogh color prints, a circulation premium (how different from the Murdochian Wingo games of today) which was one result of the nearly hysterical success of Alfred Barr's 1935 Van Gogh exhibition at the old Museum of Modern Art. That exhibition followed by only a year the lurid fictional biography *Lust for Life* by Irving Stone. Thousands upon thousands lined up to see paintings by the artist who cut off his ear.

SINCE THEN Van Gogh exhibitions have not been rare. They were blockbusters before the days of "blockbusters." It seems that every generation is offered at least one major show; and until the "engineer" V. W. Van Gogh, the artist's nephew, died, his collection (now the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam) seemed to be continuously on the road. Nor has Van Gogh scholarship been sparse, either. A vast bibliography has accumulated. Still, curiously, there is no definitive "life," in spite of the rich documentation based on the artist's detailed letters to his brother Theo and to fellow artists throughout his working career. In fact everything in Van Gogh studies depends upon the letters, but they are not dated; and their sequence, so crucial for understanding his concepts and the development of his style, is a question of editorial judgment, conjecture, or corroborative evidence.

Why another Van Gogh exhibition? one could thus rather snobbishly ask. And why only Arles? But it turns out to have been a very good idea, for the show at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from October 18 through December 30 offers a major correction of many popular as well as scholarly misconceptions about this best known of artists. This is the first Van Gogh exhibition in America that has its specific sort of focus. We know that Vincent left Paris in 1888 after a winter which strained his emotional and physical health. He chose Arles in the South of France, probably at the suggestion of Toulouse-Lautrec. In the nearly fifteen months he spent there, he created the intense pictorial style upon which his fame rests.

Eugene Victor Thaw, an art dealer in New York, is co-author of *Jackson Pollock: A Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Drawings, and Other Works* (Yale University Press).

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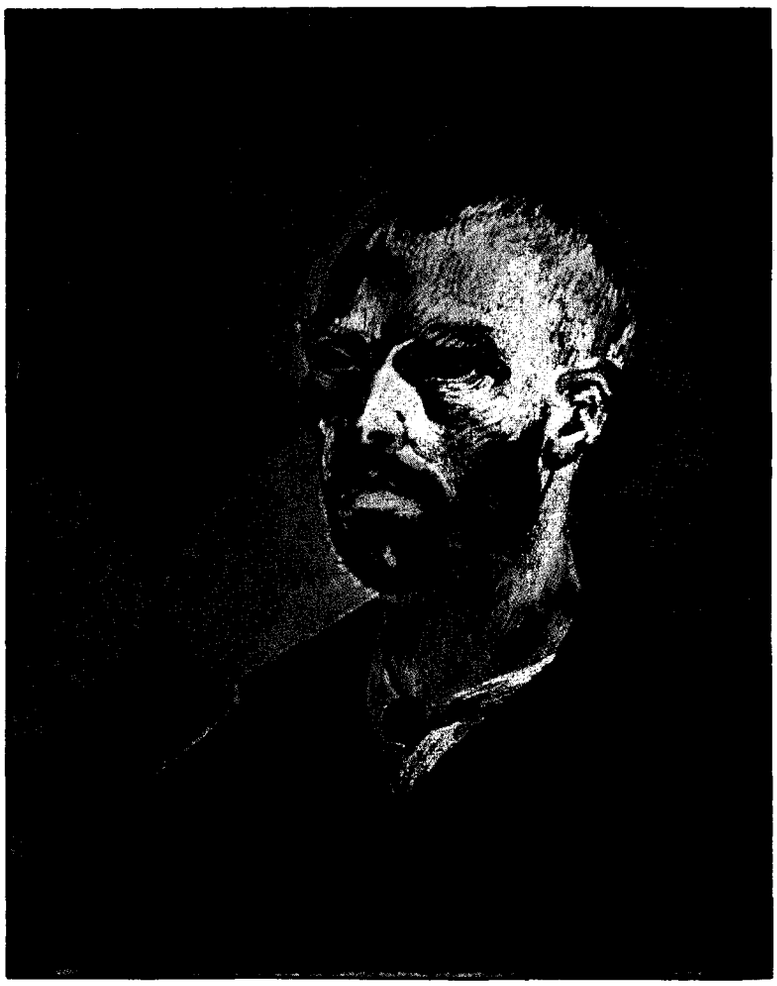
He produced an incredible 200 paintings and 100 finished drawings; he persuaded Gauguin to join him as the first step toward creating a commune of artists; he suffered the fits of madness which led him to commit himself to an asylum nearby at St. Remy. What happened at Arles, therefore, is the very essence of Vincent's life and art. To be sure, after Arles he had more than a year left of feverish activity before he shot himself at Auvers on July 27, 1890, but the Arles work alone, both in drawing and painting, would have been sufficient to prove him a very great master.

Professor Ronald Pickvance of the University of Glasgow, the guest curator of the Metropolitan Museum's exhibition, has unfolded the work both chronologically and by subject. His immensely detailed and erudite catalogue is a pleasure to read for the layman who follows the story. It is also a notable contribution to scholarship. Since Van Gogh painted and drew out of doors a great deal, he refers constantly in his letters to the weather. Pickvance has uncovered evidence about extended rain, hail, and snow storms from the local newspapers of the period, which enables him to re-date many letters and thus to define the sequence of the work more coherently. He also quotes Van Gogh's constant discussions of his precarious physical and mental states, thereby giving in corrected sequence what amounts to a complete pathology of the artist. Pickvance is equally thorough in identifying the relation of each work to a specific place, even letting us know where Vincent was standing or sitting.

Although Arles was a Roman town with famous monuments and tourist sites, Van Gogh generally avoided the obvious motifs and instead painted humble orchards, wheat fields, bridges, and roadways on the outskirts of the city. The crucial visit by stagecoach to Saintes-Maries, where he saw the Mediterranean for the first and only time, took place, as Pickvance demonstrates, from May 30 to June 3, rather than from June 17 to 23, as was formerly thought. Thus the great group of harvest paintings follow as a single working "campaign," and are not divided by the visit to the sea.

Moreover, this exhibition clarifies once and for all the relation of Van Gogh's drawings to the paintings. At Arles he undertook to draw with a reed pen in both brown and black ink, in a style which grows progressively more cursive, symbolic, dynamic, and abstract. Both Rembrandt and Hokusai have been invoked to find parallels in art for these remarkable sheets of paper, but they are quite unlike any other drawings in their graphic vocabulary of dots, swirls, headlong scrawls, and hatchings. They remain thoroughly faithful to the subject while they heighten emotional response to the pitch of ecstasy, and keep the surface alive with abstract pattern. Most of the Arles drawings are independent works of art; they are related to the paintings, but they are not studies for them. He made three groups of drawings copied after his own paintings and sent them in batches to his brother Theo, to the artist Emile Bernard, working with Gauguin at Pont-Aven, and to John Russell, an English acquaintance to whom Theo, an art dealer, hoped to sell a Gauguin. Far from being mere repetitive exercises, the drawings Van Gogh made from his own paintings prodded him to some of his most expressive works.



SELF-PORTRAIT, 1888. FOGG ART MUSEUM, BEQUEST OF MAURICE WERTHEIM

In the cavernous galleries of the Metropolitan Museum, where even the largest of his canvases look like postage stamps, it is the drawings (hung more closely in groups on panels in subdued light) which are perhaps the real stars of this show. Previous Van Gogh exhibitions have always included drawings, but primarily as an afterthought to the paintings; and there were never so many. Here we can see their equal importance in the *oeuvre*. We can observe how the artist used the shorthand discoveries from his reed pen work to enhance the textures and patterns of the paintings. The textures are crucial because these paintings are virtually sculpted in paint; and it is the tactile impression, together with the color used self-consciously for emotional ends, that gives Van Gogh's paintings their epiphanous quality. Unfortunately, the very nature of a "blockbuster" exhibition, particularly its management of crowds, will make it nearly impossible for most visitors to get close enough to see the richness of the painted surfaces. And, of course, in these dangerous days, some of the loans are under Plexiglas. (Bulletproof?) Never mind. Seeing the originals, however imperfectly, is still better than seeing the reproduc-

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tions, although the plates in the catalogue are not at all bad and will serve as excellent aids to memory.

Still, the dangerous days just mentioned, as well as the petty and complex politics of the museum, have taken their toll in the omissions from this great show. The Russian loans were apparently promised—they are all reproduced in the catalogue—and then withdrawn as superpower relations worsened. The Dutch have been fairly generous, but have held back due to some disgruntlement with the Met. And the greatest landscape of the Arles period, *The Blue Cart on the Plain* is missing, although it has been in New York several times before. The horizontal *Garden in Arles* was denied, although it would have been paired for the first time with its pendant, the vertical *Garden* which is in the show. These problems are, however, part of the normal struggle of loan exhibitionism. What might have been scandalous, however, was the refusal of Yale to lend the crucial *Night Café* given the university by Stephen C. Clark, a former Metropolitan trustee and benefactor. Fortunately, reason and good will prevailed and the painting has been added to the exhibition at the last moment. There were no lendable *Sunflowers*, it seems, yet there is enough after all, including six flowering orchards, four wheat fields, three *Sowers*, four *Portraits of Joseph Roulin*, the Fogg Museum *Self Portrait* dedicated to Gauguin, four *Public Gardens*, the two railroad bridges, the *Tarascon Diligence*, *Van Gogh's Bedroom*, two *Arlesiennes*, *Van Gogh's Chair*, and the great *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear*. One cannot complain either about seeing together for the first time in this century the five magnificent large-scale drawings of Montmajour and its abbey from the plain of the Crau. One of the five lay unrecognized in a small Belgium museum until 1957 and is not recorded in the standard literature; this is its first appearance in a loan exhibition since 1891.

The exhibition includes a prelude of several transitional paintings done in Paris shortly before Van Gogh left for Arles. Unaccountably, it does not attempt a postlude of a few paintings done at St. Remy only fifteen miles away, in which we can see the artist continuing the same style. The Metropolitan's own *Cypresses* would not be out of place. The interaction between Van Gogh and Gauguin is well illustrated by an exceptionally good group of Gauguin's paintings, and by a famous drawing made during his ill-fated visit.

The catalogue text, as I have pointed out, is full of new information: identification of places, of states of mind, of corrected time sequences, of facts of every sort. Yet here, too, something is missing. The copious quotations from the letters reveal little of Van Gogh's theory of painting. We come to know many things, but not the main thing. For example, from letter Number 490 written to Theo on the 26th of May, 1888, Pickvance quotes a lovely passage about the topography of the Montmajour drawings and later, from the same letter, shows Van Gogh declining to participate in an exhibition in Dordrecht. Nowhere does he quote from the same Number 490 the important sentence "I am trying now to exaggerate the essential and, with set purpose, to leave the obvious vague." On August 11, 1888, Vincent sent some drawings again to Theo, which Pickvance dutifully reports, but he does not quote the following:

> I feel that what I learned in Paris is leaving me. . . . And I should not be surprised if the impressionists soon will find fault with my way of painting, which has been fertilized by the ideas of Delacroix rather than by theirs. Because, instead of trying to reproduce exactly what I have before my eyes, I use color more arbitrarily so as to express myself vigorously.

It is difficult, in the end, to think of Vincent without also thinking of Theo, the saintly brother whose own fragile health allowed him to survive Vincent by only six months. An unfinished letter to Theo which Vincent left off writing the day he shot himself acknowledges the special role of that faithful and understanding man:

> Yet my dear brother, there is one thing I have always told you and which I am repeating once more with all the seriousness of my mental efforts, assiduously concentrated to do as well as I can—I say again that I shall always consider you as something more than an ordinary dealer in Corots, that through me you have your share in the actual production of certain canvases which retain their calmness even in disaster. □

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation by Joel Williamson (Oxford University Press). A full-scale reconsideration of black-white relations in American history. (Reviewed 10/15/84)

Deadly Gambits: The Reagan Administration and the Stalemate in Nuclear Arms Control by Strobe Talbott (Knopf). A masterful account of arms control policymaking since 1981. (10/15/84)

Solzhenitsyn: A Biography by Michael Scammell (Norton). A bold, balanced portrait of the man some hail as prophet, others denounce as fanatic. (10/15/84)

The War of the End of the World: by Mario Vargas Llosa (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). An apocalyptic vision from Peru's most important novelist. (10/8/84)

Margaret Mead: A Life by Jane Howard (Simon & Schuster). A discerning biography of the influential American anthropologist. (10/1/84)

Stranger on the Square by Arthur and Cynthia Koestler (Random House). The posthumously published journals of one of the century's major intellectuals and his wife. (10/8/84)

Season of Spoils: The Story of the Reagan Administration's Attack on the Environment by Jonathan Lash, with Katherine Gillman and David Sheridan (Pantheon). A timely and persuasive account of a ruinous record. (10/1/84)

The Engineer of Human Souls by Josef Skvorecky (Knopf). An epic novel of a Czech émigré's life. (8/27/84)

Labour in Power: 1945-1951 by Kenneth Morgan (Oxford University Press). A comprehensive account of the party's finest hours. (9/17&24/84)

The Letters of Jean Rhys edited by Francis Wyndham and Diana Melly (Viking). The novelist becomes one of her own greatest characters. (9/10/84)

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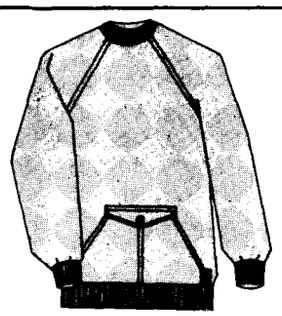

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 3*

being. I have more to say on the subject but I have three children to take care of and writing is a luxury I can't afford right now. I wanted to thank David Owen for saying what I was thinking.

ROSALIE ZIOMEK
Evanston, Illinois

TRB SHOCKS

To the editors:

As a high school librarian, I wish to complain about TRB's column in the October 1 issue ("School Spirit Sucks"). The article made several points I would like to share with our government classes. But TRB cheapened it with, at the very least a *slang* headline, at the most a *vulgar* headline. Please do not defend TRB with the statement that the objectionable word is one used by today's teenagers. We have subscribed to your magazine for many years and would like to continue to place each issue in the hands of students, knowing they are being guided into a higher level of consideration of today's problems *and* of our language.

D. SWANEY
Bucyrus, Ohio

PONT. WELL TAKEN

To the editors:

In chiding the Romans for the "triumphant touch of barbaric splendor" that they added to Egyptian obelisks by putting crosses on them, Hendrik Hertzberg seems intent on adding his own literary barbarisms to remarks on the eternal city ("Washington Diarist," TNR, October 1). His remark about the inscription on the walls of the "name, numeral, and title (Pontius Maximus, usually) of a religious officeholder" shows particular ignorance. The standard inscription PONT. MAX is an abbreviation of the title *Pontifex Maximus*. The title goes back to pre-Christian Rome and refers to a religious office, once held by Julius Caesar, among others. It was subsequently applied to the bishop of Rome as the chief priest of the city. PONT. is certainly not an abbreviation for Pontius, who for obvious reasons was not held in high honor by the Christians of Rome. Those who aspire to write erudite sneers should maintain at least a semblance of learning.

JOHN LANGAN, S.J.
Washington, D.C.

TRB, *from page 6*

man who really knows what he believes. In the debate he called federal deficits "the most important single issue of our time." Only last week it was nuclear war (and probably will be again next week in the foreign policy debate). Those who have been waiting for Mondale to articulate a vision—or "get his themes together," in the mechanistic jargon of today's politics—wait in vain.

Mondale's struggle to combine traditional Democratic shibboleths with "new realism" on matters like the deficit has produced a perfect expression of what Kevin Phillips calls "reactionary liberalism." Every penny of present government benefit programs must be preserved, but nothing new may be tried. Jobs in dying industries must be saved, whatever the price in jobs in industries yet unborn. As others have pointed out, while Reagan swipes the mantle of F.D.R. and J.F.K., Mondale ends up sounding like an old-line Republican, with a program of isolationism, protectionism, and fiscal prudence.

Mondale's opportunistic thrusts at Reagan's big mistakes are unconvincing because they seem like random point scoring, rather than parts of a coherent whole. That's the trouble with his deficit-reduction "theme," admirable though it is. Where does it fit in with what we know about Walter Mondale? Or, to take a livelier example, Mondale's valid criticism of lax security around American installations in Beirut. No one is going to vote for President on the basis of who will put more sandbags around our embassies, and no one is going to believe that Mondale cares more than Reagan about terrorism or protecting Americans in foreign lands. A man with vision, though, could turn the latest embassy explosion into a metaphor for what's wrong with Reagan's defense policy: Reagan thinks bluster plus money adds up to a strong defense; he (typically) hasn't attended to the nitty-gritty details that really make us secure.

Well, this is a bad week to be jumping the gun on recriminations. I hope the rebound continues. But if the election turns out as it still seems likely to, let's learn the lesson the Republicans learned after 1976, when they let their heads overrule their hearts and chose Gerald Ford over Ronald Reagan. People run better if they know why they're running.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Sport

IT IS PASSÉ to be young these days. No newsmagazine covers, no hymns of praise from politicians and academics, no "Man of the Year Awards" (*Time*, 1966: "Youth 25 and Under") for having wisely chosen a recent birthdate. Trendiness is following the baby-boomers into middle age. Their demographic and economic power is such that they can do no wrong. They have even managed to transform exercise, the prudent hygiene of the newly old, into a form of eroticism. The young, left behind and justifiably annoyed, have been acting very strangely. Consider one week's worth of newspaper items. First, the beer riot at Illinois State University, where a thousand students protesting restrictions on partying (no transport of beer kegs after 10 PM, for example) tore up the town. Then there was the Brown University student referendum demanding a stock of cyanide at the student infirmary in case of nuclear war. And now comes polling proof that young people love Ronald Reagan. Not only is a large majority of 18- to-24-year-olds for him, but it is a larger majority than any other age group. And not only Reagan, but Republicanism: young people are registering Republican in ratios of 2 and 3 to 1, while the rest of us are more than 4 to 3 Democratic.

WHAT TO MAKE of all this? Before being subdued by the police of the exquisitely named Normal, Illinois, the rampaging I.S.U. kids cried "We want beer." Can that be it? Yet at a similar riot two days later at Purdue, the rioters didn't cry for anything. They just went wild after a pep rally. God knows what they wanted. But maybe there is a pattern here. Anomic outbursts are '50s stuff. The cyanide request is a '70s parody. It is not just the passivity. (Even death must be subsidized, prepared, and provided for by adults.) It's the narcissism: of all the possible responses to Armageddon, from enthusiasm to dread, these kids demand sleep. As for Reaganism, that's vintage '80s, the decade of aggressive (as opposed to the '70s contemplative) selfishness—careerism, individualism, and nationalism. Missing, of course, is the '60s sensibility—rebellious, idealistic—once believed to be the natural condition of the young. Interesting. My generation was brought up on "Leave it to Beaver," and ended up taking the the dean hostage. The next generation is brought up on video anarchy. (And worse: check out the Jacksons' latest video, the enchantingly titled, and accordingly choreographed, "Torture," or the latest offering of Twisted Sister in which the school kids chant "We won't take it any more" while beating up their teacher. He is finally shot.) What does this generation end up doing? Tuning in, toning up, and turning out—for Reagan, the flag, "USA, USA!," and beer.

MEANWHILE IN THE ADULT WORLD, it has also been a time for sport. Three world-class bouts are going on at once. Most edifying, if a bit anticlimatic, are the Presidential debates, of which Mondale won the first on points and style. Unfortunately, much of the drama is missing. Mondale is running now not to win but to place. He wants to finish second, not a historic last. (Another fine performance like the Louisville debate, and he will succeed.) A more exciting spectacle has been the baseball playoffs, and the rise of the Chicago Cubs, surely a world-historical event. Believing that no team could blow a 2-0 lead in the playoffs, I was prepared to call for the dissolution of the Emil Verban Society, that venerable association of Cubs fans dedicated to very public suffering, a kind of Protestant version of the Shiite practice of joyful self-flagellation. But knowing that the Cubs are not just any team, I waited. Sure enough, traditionalists to the end, they lost three straight and blew the pennant. As they should—something that good Burkeans, like George Will, seduced as they were by the pleasures of victory, momentarily lost sight of. After all, for thirty-nine years the Cubs almost single-handedly carried the tradition of losing in America. In a culture where a tradition is anything more than a week old, victory would have been no small loss.

THE GRANDEST CONTEST, however, is going on not in Louisville or San Diego, but, forgive me, in Moscow. There the two best chess players in the world by far, champion Anatoly Karpov and challenger Garik Kasparov, are playing the triennial world championship match. This contest promised to be one of the finest in history. Karpov plays with logic and precision, and a calm that can best be described as crushing. Kasparov, at 21 the youngest challenger in chess history, is an extraordinarily deep thinker, wild, sharp, and daring. Now, I am not very partial to things Soviet, but aside from repression, chess is perhaps the thing they do best. (Those who see a connection between the two have either played no chess or too much.) In this country one has to follow the match in terse daily dispatches carried on the comics pages of the newspapers, and in a single weekly PBS show. In Washington it is broadcast on Friday afternoons from 1 to 3, the presumption being that this is a time when chess players are free, since one can draw unemployment checks in the morning, and the clubs don't get going until after dinner. The viewer half expects a commercial for the Ace Truck Driving Academy. But I'm not complaining. I have a V.C.R. I can go to the office Fridays. A particular joy last week was former world champion Boris Spassky's analysis of game 7. As the moves were telexed in from Moscow, Spassky explained Karpov's winning strategy. At every crucial point he was choosing not necessarily the best move but the most simplifying, the one that would most rationalize the position on the board. The young Kasparov, who thrives on complexity, would then search frantically for ways to complicate, often by way of desperate (and unsound: the methodical Karpov had seen to that) combinations. Kasparov eventually destroyed himself. In chess, Karpov's strategy is known as psychological. In contrast, some play for "truth," for the absolute best, the purest, move. Bobby Fischer used to play that way, Spassky pointed out. For such players, the opponent does not exist, only the pieces. They play every game against God. (God doesn't play dice with the world, said Einstein. True, He plays chess.) In the end, and not surprisingly, they lose. Fischer, for one, has withdrawn from the world, gone silent, and quite possibly mad. Spassky neglected to mention that, perhaps because he is a gentleman, perhaps because it was 2 on a Friday afternoon.

C.K.

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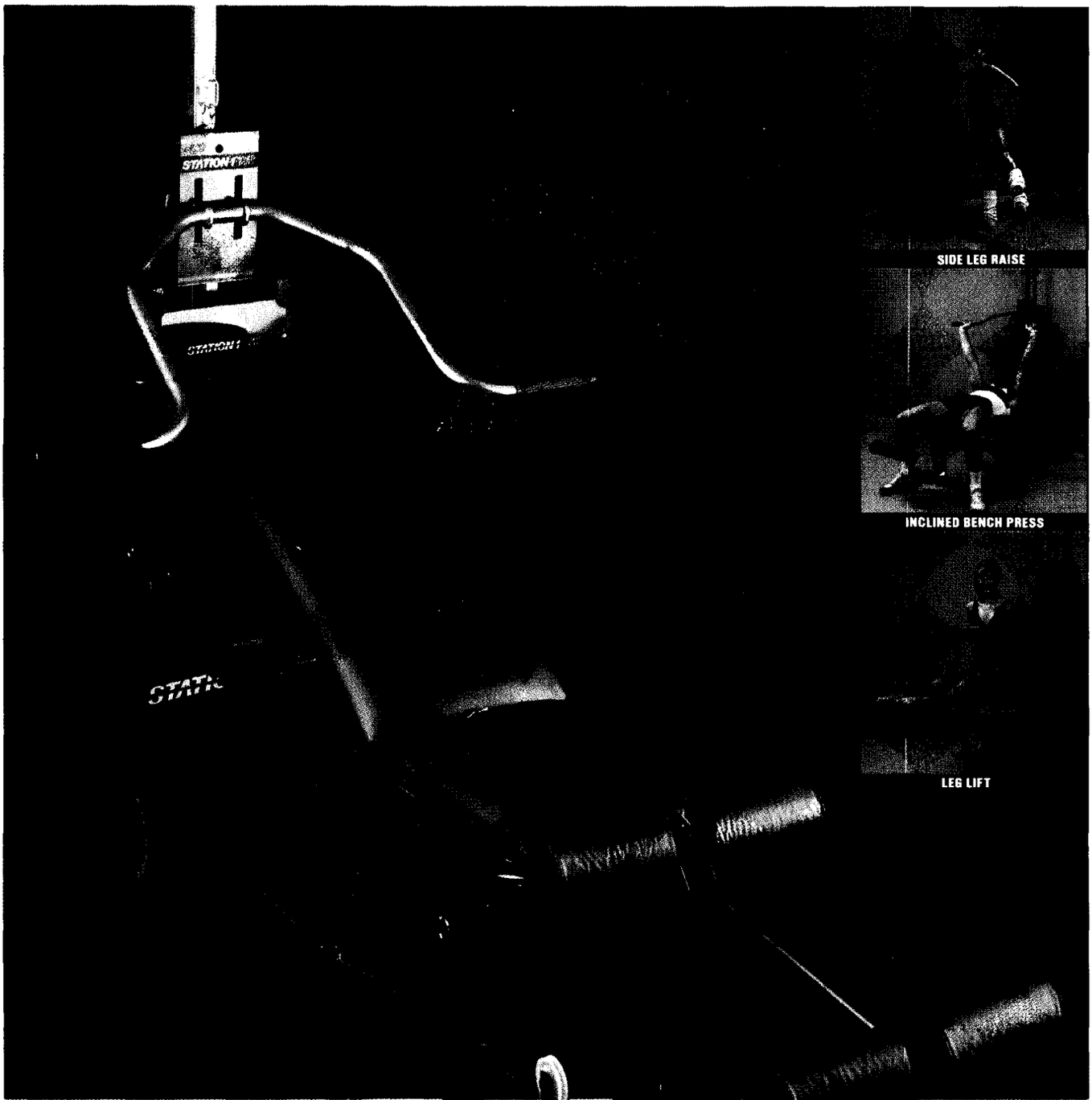

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